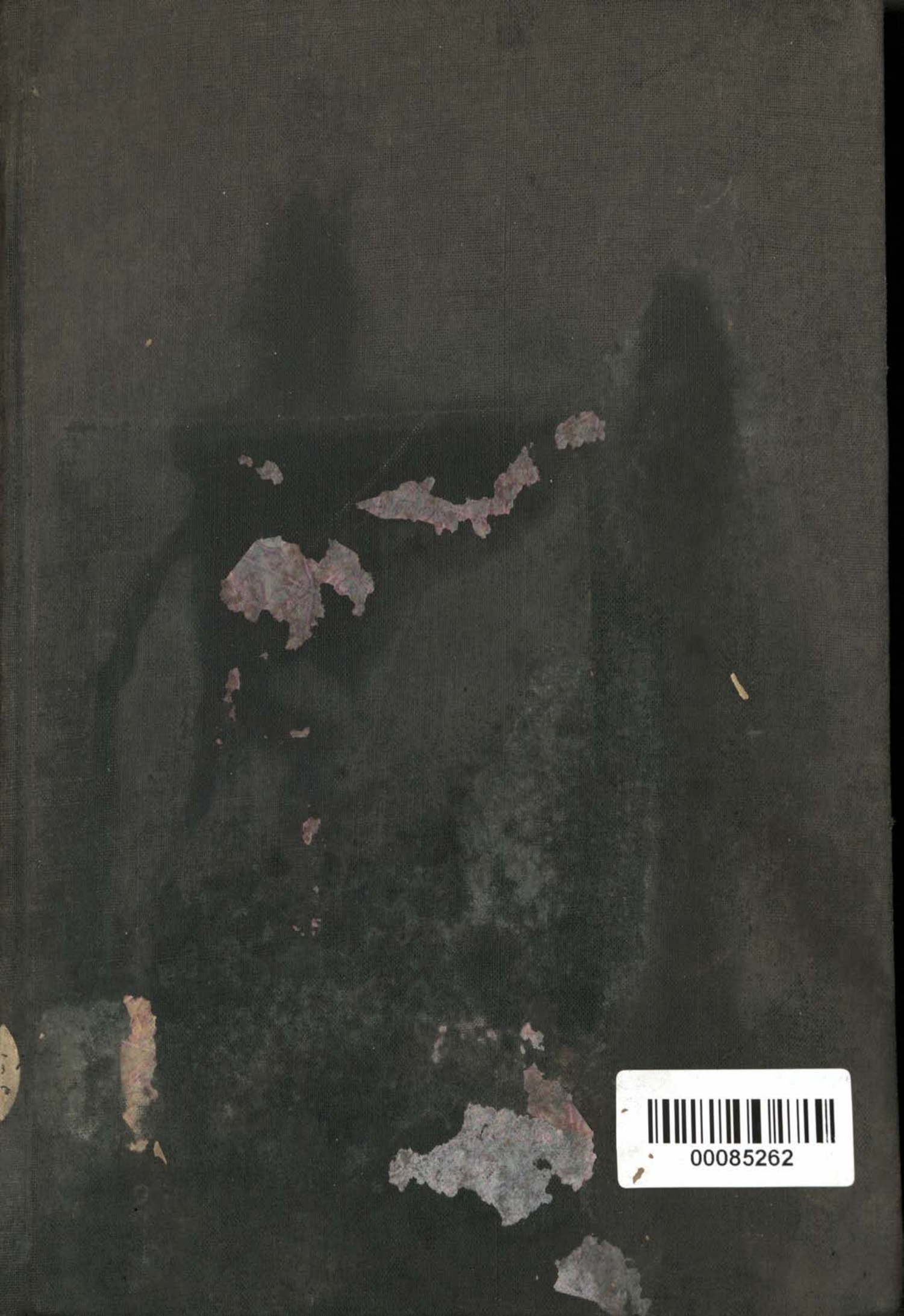
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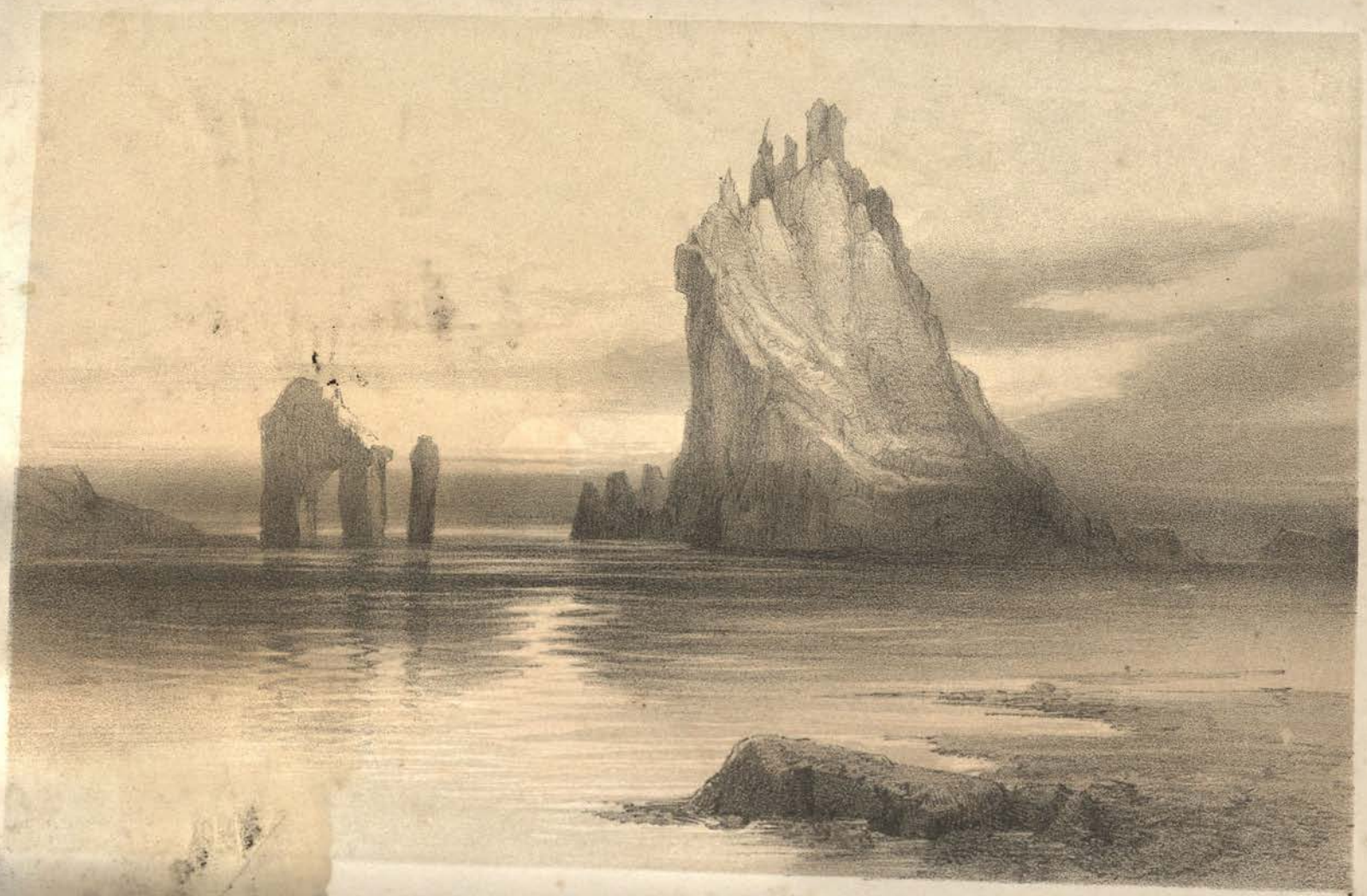

THREE ROCKS CALLED
CRASHÖLM, FINDHÖLM & DRAG.

M. & N. HANHART LITH.

A NARRATIVE

OF THE

CRUISE OF THE YACHT MARIA

AMONG

THE FEROE ISLANDS

IN THE SUMMER OF 1854.

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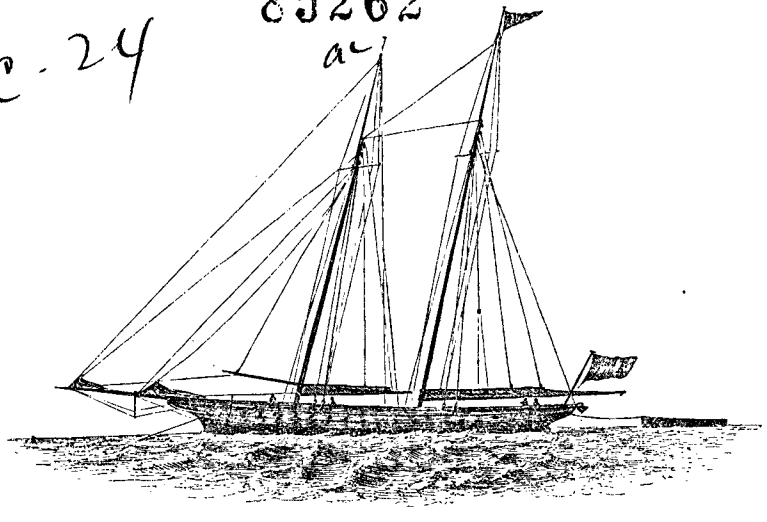

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1855.

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LONDON:
A. and G. A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-street-Square.

PREFACE.

We should consider our visit to the Feroe Islands too partial to merit being recorded in print, were it not for two considerations. One is, that no views have ever been published of the curious scenery which characterises them, and a short narrative we think will form an appropriate accompaniment to the sketches; the other, that no account of the Islands by any one who has been there, has appeared in English since 1815, when Sir George Stuart Mackenzie and Mr. Thomas Allan wrote two papers on the subject, in the Seventh Volume of the Society of Edinburgh; but these were confined almost exclusively to a description of the geological and mineralogical features of the country, and, appearing in a Philosophical Magazine, they obtained of course only a very limited circulation. We did not visit Findholm, Graasholm, and Draag; but the outline of them is so curious that we have introduced a sketch of them kindly placed at our disposal by Mr. Tennant, of Glasgow; and two other of his sketches of places we did see were so superior, that we have substituted them in lieu of our own.

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MAP OF THE
FEROE ISLANDS
Surveyed by Order of the Danish Admiralty
by CAPTN H. BORN in 1806.
(Soundings given in English fathoms)
Myggenæs
Myggenæs fiord
Holm
Sørvaag
Sørvaags fiord
Vaagö
Westmannshaven
Waagöe fiord
Trelle Nypen
Kolter
Hestoe
Hestoe fiord
Skaparfiord
Trolhead
Hoddi
Sand
Skuöe
Skuöe fiord
Suderöe fiord
Great Diamond
Little Diamond
Ornenipen
Lamba Eide
Norbea Eide
Qualboe Eide
Qualboefiord
Trangisvaag
Waagsfiord
Famarazund
Beinisvære
Suderöe
Monk
Flesrerne
Kalsöe fiord
Naalsöe
Thorshaven
Kalbak
Kalbak fiord
Skaale
Skaalefiord
Leervig fiord
Fuglefiord
Fuglefiord Creek
Fuglöe
Nordberg
Enne Hill
Nakken
Kadlenen
Mule
Mulen
Wolfervie
Ristang
Nordre Gior
Stakken
Myling Head
Eide
Tarnervig
Haldervig
Fundingsfiord
Fundang
Eidervig
Audkrivigfiord
Mugleskale
Northskuale
Skaalebotne
Giothe
Giothe Creek
Qualvig
Ore
Thorsvig
Lamba
Miaveness
Nebbet
Strendre
Boynebus
Tangen
Fleesene
Quiteness
Hoyvig
Northdale
Southdale
Eide
Argé
Kirkebeg
Kirkebeeness
Beauvais
Quabness
Skaale Creek
Skaal Head
House Creek
Dale
Trodboenypen
Skarvatange
Fames
Howe Bay
Porkern
Porkerjineess
Grønneness Bay
Suduröe
Qualboe Bay
Tvedneess
Ramen
Skarvaness
Skaalevig
Kalsöe Fiord
Kalsöe
Nakken
Mule
Kalsöe Quannes
Harald Sound
Hare Island
Dalum Sound
Strömel
Elak
Leervig
Ore
Ellidaarfiord
Skaalefiord
Skaale
Solmunde
Lamba
Sioe
Kolbre
Strendre
Gulbrey
Tangen
Fleesene
Hoyvig
Quiteness
Eide
Argé
Kirkebeg
Kirkebeeness
Beauvais
Thorshaven
Northdale
Southdale
Sund
Kalbak fiord
Kalbak
Tarnervig
Haldervig
Eidervig
Audkrivigfiord
Fundingsfiord
Fundang
Nordre Gior
Stakken
Myling Head
Eide
Mulen
Ristang
Kadlenen
Nakken
Mule
Mulen
Wolfervie
Enne Hill
Nordberg
Fuglöe
Fuglefiord
Fuglefiord Creek
Svinö
Bay
Helmen
Staaven
Beröeness
Ellidaarfiord
Leervig fiord
Skaalefiord
Skaale
Giothe
Giothe Creek
Skaalebotne
Northskuale
Fuglefiord
Mugleskale
Kalsöe

YACHT VOYAGE.

CHAPTER I.

WHILE selecting before a map a pleasant cruise for the past summer, our eyes fell on the Feroe Islands; and it occurred to us, that they might be as well worth seeing as many more frequented places. In the absence of a better source of information, we referred to a very old edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" which happened to be in the library. There we read—

"They are a cluster of little islands lying in the Northern Ocean. They belong to Denmark. There are seventeen which are habitable, each of which is a lofty mountain rising out of the sea, divided from the others by deep and rapid currents. Some of them are deeply indented with secure harbours, Providence seeming to have favoured mankind with the safest retreats in the most boisterous seas. All are very steep, and most of them faced with tremendous precipices."

The account went on to represent the surrounding seas as filled with whirlpools, and the air with whirlwinds, called by the Danes, Oes; which latter, it said, "catch up a vast quantity of water, so as to leave a temporary chasm on the spot on which they fall, and carry away with them to an amazing distance any fishes which may happen to be within reach of their fury. Thus great shoals of herrings have been found on the tops of the highest mountains."

This account, though evidently too imaginative to be implicitly relied upon, was so curious, that we determined to learn more about the Islands, and with some difficulty procured two other works on the subject, neither of them very recent. They did not contain quite such marvellous descriptions as the one quoted, but they served fully to convince us that this "Friesland" of the ancient Venetians did not merit the complete neglect in which it seemed left by modern travellers, and was worth the attention of any one who felt an interest in seeing either grand scenery, or a remarkably fine race of men, living in strange seclusion from the rest of the world. We, accordingly, chose the Feroes as the destination of our cruise; and our next step was to endeavour to find some person who had been there, and could furnish us with later information than was contained in any of the written

accounts. The search for such an individual, however, proved wholly unsuccessful. No one seemed to know anything, or care at all, about them; and neither in the great yachting nor commercial ports could we find anybody who had done more than pass the Islands in the distance. The cause of the Feroese being thus left out of the intercourse of nations will appear clearly enough hereafter.

Having completed our preparations, we sailed from Kingstown, Dublin, at two o'clock, P.M., on the 31st May. Our craft was a schooner yacht, of a modern build, 83 tons, old measurement, 68 feet long, and a fast vessel in a strong breeze, though not sparred for racing. Our party consisted of the captain, four men, two boys, a cook, a steward, a black and tan terrier, and the two authors. We also induced a mutual friend to accompany us as far as the North of Scotland, on condition of being landed before we finally took our departure from the coast.

We passed through the Sounds of Islay and Mull; and after a tedious voyage, during which we had a succession of cold northerly winds and calms, anchored at Tobermory, in Mull Island, on the afternoon of the 4th of June (NOTE A). At 10·30 A.M. the next morning we set sail; and, after rounding Ardnamurchan Point against a light contrary breeze, stood

northwards towards Skye, and then through the straits which divide it from the picturesque islands of Eig, Muick, Rum, and Canna. The wind continued resolutely to head us, and on the morning of the 6th blew so hard from the N.E., that we knew we should make little progress in beating through the Minch, and our main rigging having become very slack, we took refuge in Loch Braccadale, one of the most sheltered harbours on the coast of Skye, and spent the day in tightening the shrouds. Here, with great regret, we took leave of our friend, and having seen him and his carpet-bag safely under the charge of a Highland guide and pony, who were to convey them across the mountains to Portree, again weighed anchor in the face of a strong head wind, and arrived at Stornoway, in the Western Hebrides, at 2 o'clock P. M. on the 8th of June. This town is chiefly remarkable for the magnificent castle which overlooks it, built by Sir James Matheson, who has done a great deal in other ways to improve the place. The herring season was at its height, and the inner harbour was crowded with fishing smacks, while in yards close to, which spread their sickening odours far and wide, numbers of bare-legged girls, covered all over, not excepting their faces, with blood and scales, were busy beheading and gutting the herrings,—an operation which they performed with

marvellous quickness. Others stowed them away in barrels between layers of salt. A woman can earn as much as thirty shillings a week by this occupation during the months of May, June, and July, — after which it ceases.

As we intended to sail direct from Stornoway to the Feroe Islands, the next morning was occupied in taking on board all the water which could be stowed away in the tanks and breakers. It was necessary to lay in a sufficient store to last during the voyage there and back, lest we should be unable to approach them on account of the fogs, in which they were said to be almost constantly enveloped. Most mountainous islands, which have no other land near to compete with them for the passing clouds, attract to their neighbourhood a great quantity of hazy weather, particularly in high latitudes, but the Feroes are represented as surpassing all others in this respect. Dr. Scoresby in his "Greenland Narrative," says he passed them repeatedly, and "almost always in thick and stormy weather;" while Landt devotes great part of a chapter to disproving the assertion, current in Denmark in his time, that the Feroese were so much accustomed to living in mists, as to catch cold whenever the sun shone. Before sailing we received a most liberal and welcome present of vegetables of all kinds, from the garden of Sir James

Matheson, who, with true Highland hospitality, had left directions that, in his absence, all yachts should be so supplied.

Friday, 9*th June*, at 1·30 P.M., we took our final departure from the Scotch coast, and left Stornoway with a light southerly wind, which, as our course lay nearly due north, was fair; but towards evening it fell away, and during the night came from the N. W.

Saturday, 10*th June*. The day commenced with the wind N.W. by N. At nine o'clock A.M. we passed North Rona, a bleak looking island, about thirty miles north of Cape Wrath. It is a mile and a half long, by a mile broad, and its highest point 600 feet. The only landing place is so rocky and exposed, that it is not available except in very calm weather, and the sea was too rough to admit of our going on shore. The island has not a tree or shrub upon it, but affords some pasture for sheep; and a sailor who had been in a revenue cutter informed us, that a shepherd and his family are its sole inhabitants. Their existence must be a singularly dreary one, separated as they are by ten leagues of stormy ocean from the nearest land. Dr. M'Culloch, in his work on the Western Islands of Scotland, which appeared in 1819, gives a very interesting account of his visit to the island. It was then

occupied by a single cotter and his family, in the employment of the principal tenant of Lewis, who sent a boat there twice a year to bring away the produce of the sheep, and the feathers collected from the sea fowl. They were so unaccustomed to other visitors, that on the appearance of Dr. M^c^Culloch's boat, they fled, and hid themselves among the rocks; and "though a few words of Gaelic soon recalled the man and his son, it was some time before the females came from their retreat; very unlike in look and appearance the inhabitants of a civilised world."

At noon our latitude by observation was 59° 22′ north. The whole day, though not actually rainy, was dull, cold, and gloomy.

Towards evening the wind entirely died away, and we remained at the mercy of a heavy swell, in which we rolled most uneasily. Though not absolutely sea-sick our dinners "hung sadly in stays," while the two boys, who had both been at sea before in other vessels, actually paid their tribute to the deep. One poor fellow seemed very much ashamed of his weakness, and pretended to be merely looking over the side in a lounging easy kind of way; but a half-accumulated tear-drop in each eye, when he turned round, betrayed him unmistakeably to a practised observer.

Nothing can be more wretched than to be thus left in a broken sea after the wind has subsided. All the life of the scene departs, leaving nothing but discomfort behind. The lazy flapping of the sails, the monotonous creaking of the spars, the jerking of the main boom as the vessel rolls heavily over, the knowledge that with so much noise one is making no progress, and lastly the utter helplessness of the position, all exercise a depressing influence on the spirits, which can hardly be appreciated by any one who has not experienced it. The day, however, made up in length for what it wanted in comfort; sunset took place at half past nine o'clock, and the twilight was so bright that we could have read off a sextant on deck at midnight. Indeed, we had no darkness from this time until our return to the Scotch coast. We found the constant light had many conveniences, but in the end became an annoyance. There is something disagreeable to a person unaccustomed to it, in deliberately stripping and turning in by sunlight, and our associations made it so difficult to sleep, that we soon longed for a few hours of peaceful darkness.

Sunday, 11*th June*. — Early in the morning a strong south-easterly breeze sprang up, which carried us rapidly on our course, and at 7.30 A.M. we heard the welcome cry from the

man on the look out, of "land ahead on the lee bow." We knew it must be the southernmost point of the Feroes, but it was still very distant, and only appeared as a faint outline on the horizon. We continued to steer north, as we wished to run along the east coast of the islands, and in three hours more were abreast of Suderoe, a mountainous island about fifteen miles long by five broad lying to the south of the others. We kept about seven miles distant from its eastern shores, and from this position could distinctly see the two Diamonds, Skuöë, and Sandöë, all of them less than Suderöë; while far away to the north and north-west, high conical mountains occasionally showed themselves through the clouds. Affairs in every way were in striking contrast to the previous evening. The morning was fine and clear, all on board seemed in good spirits, and the vessel was flying through the water at the rate of nine to ten knots an hour, leaving a long white track behind, and giving to the bold headlands on the coast the effect of a rapidly-shifting panorama; while what appeared in the distance one mass of mountains gradually dissolved itself into separate islands, as we opened the fiords which divide them from one another. By noon the wind, which had been steadily increasing, blew so hard that, though running free, we had to take in our

main gaff topsail, and double-reef the mainsail; the little Diamond, which closely resembles Ailsa Craig, bearing then N.W. by N., nine miles distant.

A first approach to the Feroe Islands, even on this, their tamest side, is very striking. Their sides are almost everywhere perpendicular precipices to a considerable height above the water's edge, though broken near the top by grassy slopes and terraces. The few practicable landing-places, and nearly all the villages, are concealed in the fiords, or behind projecting rocks; so that the shores, when viewed from the sea, appear singularly inaccessible and uninhabited. To us they presented their wildest and most deserted aspect, for not a boat was to be seen in any direction; and towards the afternoon, those driving mountain mists, which the old Northmen conceived to be the shades of their forefathers flitting by, swept along the coasts, adding greatly to the gloom of the scene, and making us doubly anxious to secure a safe anchorage before the whole group relapsed into its normal obscurity.

Thorshaven, the chief place in the Islands, situated on the east coast of Stromöe, opposite Naalsöe, was the port we wished first to make, as we thought we should there most readily obtain an interpreter, and information as to our

M. & N. HANHART LITH

PASSING THE DIAMONDS.

onward course. We had a chart made from the surveys of Captain Born when governor of the Islands in 1806, but it was not accompanied by the usual description of the coast and anchorages sold with charts; nor do we believe any regular sailing directions have been published. The absence of particular information in those respects greatly embarrassed us; for Thorshaven appeared by this chart so exposed to the very quarter from which the wind was blowing, that we doubted whether we could safely lie there. It was also certain that, in the present state of the weather, no pilot would venture out to us; and, even with implicit reliance on the accuracy of one's chart, it is seldom desirable to run into a strange fiord without, as an unknown current may make the vessel unmanageable. Indeed Landt mentions a case which occurred during his residence in the country, of a captain, who, when seeking shelter from bad weather in one of the Feroese harbours, had his vessel driven on shore on the Island of Kolter by the current, where it was lost with all the cargo. As the wind, however, was tearing straight through the Naalsöe passage, we thought we should have the command of the yacht in any probable current; and if no pilots came off to us when fairly in the Sound, or they reported Thorshaven an unfit harbour, we could stand out to

sea again through the northern mouth of the Fiord. We accordingly ran into it, keeping close to the shore of Naalsöe to avoid some shoals marked on the opposite coast, and hoisted a jack on the foremast head,—a signal universally understood as a request for a pilot; and, when well under the lee of this island, we hove the vessel to in comparatively smooth water.

In a few minutes we observed a boat put off from a village there, which, when it neared us, proved to be an open boat, sharp at both ends, fully twenty feet long, and containing twelve men, two of whom sat side by side on each bench. They were tall leggy fellows, in pointed caps, brown jackets, and knee breeches; and rowed with very short small bladed oars, fastened to the gunwale by leather thongs, in a manner which made it impossible to feather them. The boat was not painted, but well covered outside with tar, and finished at each end by prows, which serve as handles with which to pull it upon the beach.

The first words the natives spoke when they came within hearing were "any sick men on board;" for it appears the islanders have suffered very severely from the introduction of infectious diseases by strangers, and entertain a great dread of them. We were greatly relieved to find they spoke a little

English, (though it has become so much the universal language of the sea, that a few nautical words are current on almost every coast); and we soon set their fears at rest as to our health, upon which they came alongside, and two of them scrambled over our quarter, while the rest remained towing after the yacht in their boat. In answer to our anxious inquiries, they declared "Thorshaven was a gut harbour, very gut," which was highly satisfactory, as the gale was rising and the mists were thickening around us every minute, and they pointed it out to us immediately opposite, about three miles to leeward on the other side of the sound. All we could perceive was a black church steeple, the roofs of the houses being covered with grass, which makes it impossible at a distance to distinguish them from the surrounding hills. After a short stare of curiosity round, one of the men took possession of the helm, and steered the vessel towards Thorshaven, while our sailors were taking in the sails preparatory to anchoring. As we neared the town, its various features became clearer; flags were hoisted in several places to welcome us, and so rare are arrivals even in this the chief port of the Islands, that in spite of the heavy rain which had set in, the inhabitants flocked in crowds to the shore to see who the new comers were. The situation of Thorshaven is in

no respect striking. It does not contain more than 120 single storied houses, which extend round two little bays, each about 150 yards long, by half that breadth; and over a tongue of land some fifty yards broad, which divides them from one another. In the background are barren turf hills, not precipitous enough to be picturesque. The shores are rocky, and the ground the little town stands upon is broken into hillocks, over which the houses are crowded together without any order, the front of one facing the side of another; the streets between them being only steep uneven paths never more than six feet broad. The pilots steered us into the south western bay, and let go our anchor in the middle of it, in nine fathoms of water, at six o'clock P.M., within a stone's throw of either side. It proved to be a very fair harbour, being protected by the Gloverness point from the full force of a south-easterly sea; but as the vessel dragged slowly, we moored her by ropes from both bows to rings on either shore, and with this additional security she rode very safely. The pilots asked a pound for their work, though, when given them, they looked so inquiringly at it, that we fancy they can only have seen it before in the shape of twenty shillings. After it was explained to them they seemed much pleased, and before leaving they shook hands with all on board,—a ceremony

which takes place between the highest and the lowest in this primitive land. There was only one other vessel in Thorshaven, a little Danish sloop of forty tons.

Immediately after we anchored, a Feroese gentleman came on board, who introduced himself to us as Mr. Müller, the Syssellman; or, as he would be called in England, the stipendiary magistrate of the district. He spoke excellent English, and almost in the same breath, asked us what news we brought of the great war, and apologised for the gale, which he said he feared might give us an unfavourable impression of his native climate. We could honestly assure him, that so far we had no reason to complain of his country on this head, as we had brought the storm with us from the south, and had no doubt it was raging more violently still in the English Channel. He then explained to us that he had perfected his English in London in 1851, when he visited the Great Exhibition, and was the only one of his countrymen who represented the Feroe Islands at that vast assemblage of nations. He spoke in warm terms of the attention he had then received, and kindly promised to come on board early in the morning, to give us all the information in his power as to the best means for attaining the objects of our visit. Having

thus got safely to our destination, and secured an agreeable companion as interpreter, we had good reason to be satisfied with the day's work, and changing our wet clothes, we sat down to a very late dinner, as Pepys would have said, in "much contentment." It was so rainy, and the splashing waves in the bay made it so disagreeable going over the short distance between the vessel and the shore, that we did not land that evening. The night which followed must have been a fearful one at sea; and as we lay in our berths and listened to the tremendous tempest roaring through the rigging, we felt very thankful that we had reached a safe anchorage in time.

> "The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last,
> The rattling showers rose on the blast:
> That night a child might understand
> The de'il had business on his hand."

The remainder of Burns's description of a Scotch storm would not be applicable, for there was no thunder; and, strange to say, thunder is more common in the Feroes in winter than in summer: indeed, in summer it is very rare; and Landt says, "Lightning of a destructive kind is wholly

unknown." The gale reached its height about midnight, and on our return to England, we found it had extended from the coast of Portugal; commencing there on Saturday afternoon, when we were becalmed, and continuing until the Tuesday morning following.

CHAPTER II.

As we find none of our friends know anything of the Feroe Islands beyond their geographical position, and only those who have been lately at school even that, it will be desirable before beginning our travels in the interior, to give a short outline of their general circumstances and antecedents: Such a sketch will prevent our having to interrupt our narrative by dragging in cumbrous explanations. (NOTE B.)

They are situated between 61° 26′ and 62° 25′ of northern latitude, and 6° 20′ and 7° 40′ of western longitude, and contain an area of about 850 square miles. Seventeen of the Islands are inhabited, the largest of which are Stromöe and Osteröe, lying in the centre of the group; the former is twenty-eight miles long, and on the average six miles broad, and the latter is the same breadth, but only twenty-three miles long. Next in size to these come Waagöe, Sandöe, and Suderöe, which are about half the size of Osteröe. All the other islands are much smaller and vary in size down to mere rocks; the least of the inhabited ones being the

Storr Diamond, which supports only one farmer with his family and servants.

The Feroes are composed almost wholly of various kinds of trap, alternating with beds of tuffa. Basaltic rocks occur in several places, and occasionally in a columnar form, though the columns are never found articulated, as at Staffa and the Giant's Causeway.

We believe geologists entertain little doubt that the islands owe their present position to submarine volcanic action; but they exhibit no traces of volcanos having been active, subsequent to their appearance above the level of the sea. There are coal mines in Suderöe, but the quality of the coal Mr. Allan describes as bad. It burns with difficulty, emits an intolerable smell, and resembles in every respect that found near Ballintoy, in the county of Antrim.

The climate of these islands is free from extremes of heat or cold, and the winter is much milder than the latitude would lead one to expect, owing to the proximity of the sea on every side, and in part perhaps to a branch of the Gulf Stream which flows past them. Snow seldom remains many days on the ground, except upon the summits of the highest mountains; and even there it disappears in summer, with the exception of a few dirty patches. The mean temperature of

the three warmest months of the year at Thorshaven varies from 56·9° to 51·7°; and of the three coldest months from 41·6° to 33°; while the greatest height the thermometer is recorded as having reached is 72·5°, and the lowest 18·5°.

Grass, bere barley, and a few potatoes are the chief products of the soil. Common barley will not ripen, and is imported largely from Copenhagen. The soil is everywhere very shallow, and the surface so uneven that the plough cannot be used, so that the earth has to be turned over by the spade. The quantity of land under cultivation is however very small, and consists merely of a few patches round the more sheltered bays. Of the wild plants and herbs found few are interesting, except to regular botanists; but the Feroese have evidently studied carefully all the purposes to which they can be applied, and use many of them for dyeing, and a great number as medicines. Out of the *Carenaria vesicaria*, a kind of grass which grows in marshy places, they make ropes, mats, and baskets. The salt carried all over the Islands by the high winds in winter, and the violence of the wind itself, act as a great check to vegetation; and no trees, or even shrubs, are to be seen anywhere, except a few in the Governor's and Sysellman's gardens at Thorshaven: there they are protected by walls from every wind, and have not-

withstanding, often to be replaced; while a small cherry-tree, three feet high, which never bears fruit, is considered worthy of a little glasshouse to itself. The country must, however, have been wooded at some former period, as remains of trees are dug out of the bogs in large quantities.

They were first peopled by the Norwegian pirates, probably about the ninth century; and though all the people know a little Danish, the common language is still an old Scandinavian dialect, which in process of time has become different from any other existing one, and which is not written.

They now belong to Denmark, and receive all their laws thence; but a short time ago, a sort of Feroese parliament was established, to report on the suitableness of the laws before their being put in force. Its duties and powers are limited to thus recording its opinion. The Government consists of a Governor, a Sheriff, a Supreme Judge, who holds a court annually in each village of importance, an Administrator of Trade, and six Sysellmen. The Sysellmen are natives, and live in their respective districts, in which they administer justice in minor cases. All the other functionaries are Danes, who remain only a few years in the Islands, and while there make Thorshaven their head-quarters. Besides these, two doctors are sent from Copenhagen, who with the officials enumerated

and the clergymen, are we believe the only strangers in the Feroes.

Christianity is said to have been introduced in the year 1000 by Sigmund Bresteson, a Norwegian, who converted Thrand, one of the chiefs, by threatening to behead him; and the other inhabitants, encouraged by so good an example, consented to be baptized. They changed the Roman Catholic religion to the Lutheran, at the time of the Reformation in Denmark, and now hold the latter faith. The Ecclesiastical Establishment comprises a Provost, subject to the bishop of Copenhagen, and seven clergymen, all Danes, with the exception of one who is a native. As there are seventeen inhabited Islands, and the channels between them are sometimes impassable for weeks together, this supply is very inadequate. In the absence of a clergyman, however, the congregations on Sundays often assemble in the churches, and one of their number reads in Danish to the others a printed sermon, accompanied by, as our friends the Americans would express it, the Lutheran "fixings" appointed for the day by their Church. The circuits of a Feroese clergyman are by no means such easy affairs as those of an English country curate, who trots in his own gig along a good road round his parish, or gets a friendly lift in the market-cart of a parishioner.

There are no roads, except for about half a mile out of Thorshaven, and no wheeled conveyances in the Islands. The journeys of the clergy have, therefore, to be made along narrow precipitous mountain paths, or over hills with no path at all, much of the way on foot, or at best on a little pony; and when the weather is fine, in open boats round coasts which for miles possess no landing-places, and where, consequently, a sudden change may at any time expose them for hours to the dangers of a stormy sea. The coasts of the Greater Diamond are so perpendicular, that it is only visited two or three times in summer, and that during very fine weather, on which occasion the pastor is hoisted up its precipitous sides in a basket; one clergyman who went to visit a sick person in Myggenaes was detained there fourteen weeks, unable to return home, owing to continued storms.

Before the Reformation, most of the land had gradually passed, by means of death-bed bequests and penitential fines, into the possession of the Roman Catholic Church. By that measure it was transferred to the King of Denmark, and nearly all the farms are now held under the Danish Government at a very moderate fixed rent, the lease passing to the son on the father's death, as a matter of course. There are also a few allodial estates, but having been subdivided through

successive generations, they have become so small that the possessors of them are generally not so rich as the holders of Crown lands.

The population of these Islands has steadily increased, and in 1845 numbered 7782, that of Thorshaven being 900. Until a short time ago a law existed, passed with a view to keeping the population in check, forbidding any one to marry who could not satisfy the authorities that he had the means of supporting a family; but as it was found to limit the number of marriages more than the number of births, it was very wisely repealed.

We found that the extreme seclusion of the Feroese from the rest of the world, is caused by the Danish Government monopolising the whole commerce of the country, and not allowing any private individuals, either Danes, or the subjects of other nations, to trade with them. They have therefore no commercial stimulus to go abroad, and possess only open boats; nor have foreigners anything to gain by seeking their shores, while ordinary travellers are of course unable to frequent places to which trade has not established any regular conveyances. The Islands have no steam communication with any other country, and the only vessels which ever visit them, are three little schooners which carry on the trade

with Copenhagen, an occasional Shetland fishing-smack, and sometimes a passing French man-of-war, for water on its way to the northern fisheries. M. Müller could only remember one other yacht having been at Thorshaven; namely, that of Mr. Tennant of Glasgow, the "Ruby Queen," in 1852.

The exports are knit woollen jerseys, hose, and stockings, tallow, fish, train oil, feathers, skins, and some butter. Of these the jerseys are by far the most important and valuable; they are never worn by the natives, who look upon them as too coarse for their own use, but are sold in Denmark to sailors in large quantities. The imports are corn and grain, malt, brandy, cheap Continental wines, tea, coffee, sugar, spices, salt, tobacco, hemp, iron, lead, lime, bricks, timber, tar, glass, nails, gunpowder, cotton and linen cloths, and small ware.

The Feroese are very long-lived. Out of every 1000 deaths 349 take place after the age of 70; whereas in Denmark, in the same number the proportion who outlive that Scriptural limit is only 187; the average duration of life in the Feroes is $44\frac{2}{3}$ years, including still-born children, while in Denmark it is only 36. Debes, in the Foeroa Reserata, mentions the case of one man, by name, Erasmus Magnussen, of Harold Sound, who married at the age of 90, lived to

see his wife become the mother of five children the youngest of whom was born when he was 103, and who died at the advanced age of 110. This longevity is attributable to the healthiness of the climate, their active open air pursuits, and their general habits of temperance, for though on festive occasions they drink brandy very freely, confirmed dram drinkers are rare, and when they occur, generally end their lives insane. Among the sober part of the population, also, mental disorders are very common. Doctor Panum asserts that one per cent. of the population are affected by them, and adds, "There is a remarkable similarity in the form of the disorders." With many he observed, "a quiet form of religious delusion, where the affected individuals saw visions, and believed themselves to be in direct communication with our Saviour and the Holy Ghost, while still more believed themselves possessed of an evil demon who constantly forced them to act against their better judgment, causing them to destroy the articles near them, and to strike the by-standers during their fits of fury, and then they generally sank into a melancholy and irritable condition. Both these forms seem often to pass on to fatuity." He attributes the prevalence of insanity to the gloomy character of the scenery, and constant mists; but it seems to us more likely to be owing to the violent contrast

between the winter and summer life of the inhabitants. Summer is at once the season for whale hunting, sea-fishing, fowling, and tilling the earth; and the pursuits and labours of man in these latitudes are not then curtailed by any interval of darkness. In winter on the other hand, there are only a few hours of daylight, and the villagers are often cut off for weeks together by storms from any of their occupations, and from all communication with the neighbouring islands, or even with the other villages in their own. At such times their sufferings from *ennui* must be great; and as indigestion is known to be one of the most fruitful sources of insanity, it may readily be conceived that both physical and mental causes may combine to produce it, out of the transition from a very active to a very inactive life.

Epidemic diseases seem to be severe in these Islands, in the inverse ratio to the frequency of their occurrence. Smallpox has not raged there since 1705, when it swept the population of one whole island away. From the year 1781 to 1846 measles were unknown; but in the latter year 6000 persons out of a population of 7700 were attacked by them, and during the first nine months 102 deaths were caused by the disorder. Here as in St. Kilda (a place also very rarely visited, and where the diet of the people in many respects

resembles that of the Feroese), the inhabitants believe that the arrival of strangers gives them cold; and Governor Pleyen who resided seventeen years at Thorshaven, assured Dr. Panum that there was more foundation for this apparently absurd belief, than he had at one time supposed, as a kind of influenza, called in the native language kruym, invariably made its appearance on the arrival of the first trading-vessel in spring, commencing among those who had the charge of unloading her. We cannot vouch for the truth of this extraordinary phenomenon; but it is also mentioned by Landt, and we were assured in Thorshaven, that influenza generally does attend the arrival of the first trading-vessels every year, but our informant attributed it to the coincidence of their arriving at an unhealthy season. This explanation is however not satisfactory, as Governor Pleyen asserted that the breaking out of kruym was always contemporaneous with the arrival of the traders, though the period of the year at which it took place varied as much as two months. Leprosy was once not uncommon, but it has quite disappeared, and by some its dying out is attributed to the people having ceased to live so exclusively on fish.

The diet of the Feroese is deficient neither in quality nor flavour; its staple consisting of barley bread, salted mutton,

fish, dried and fresh, including whales, occasionally potatoes, and last but not least sea-fowl. Puffins and lomvirs are the sea-birds most preferred, and oftenest eaten; but the poor people also eat many other kinds not considered fit for food elsewhere, and among them young gulls, kittiwakes, and cormorants. We had a lomvir cooked, taking care to skin it before roasting, which always makes a strong bird eat less coarsely, and did not find it much more fishy than a barnacle goose.

The fish, flesh, and fowl are all allowed sometimes to reach an advanc ed stage of decomposition before they are eaten, in which state they are called "rast," and preferred to fresh food. Much of the mutton killed in autumn is not salted, but merely dried in the wind; and, before it is all consumed, it is often alive again.

There are very few shops, except the three large Government stores, in these Islands, as the inhabitants supply most of their wants at home. Division of labour, so much extolled by political economists, is little practised here: every family spins, weaves, dyes, cobbles, and tailors for itself; so that all their garments, with the exception of linen shirts, which are only used by the few, are manufactured entirely at home, from the time the materials leave the animals' backs to the

final stitch which completes them for those of their second wearers.

Though the Feroese language is not written, and there are absolutely no books in it, an attempt to translate the New Testament having failed, the natives are fond of reading; and as nearly all of them know Danish, they are enabled to gratify their taste for it by obtaining books from Copenhagen. Chess and dancing are both very favourite pastimes with them; but as they have no instrumental music, they are obliged to follow the latter amusement to the sound of the voice.

The most valuable domestic animal possessed by the inhabitants is the sheep, of which from 25,000 to 35,000 are slaughtered annually; and nearly all the productive part of the country is used as pasture. The breed of sheep in the northern Islands, which is the largest, came from Iceland, and in the southern ones, from Shetland; that is to say, the breed to which the great majority of the sheep belong, as they were replaced from these countries after a great mortality, which occurred among the flocks above two centuries ago. The other domestic animals kept in the Feroes are cows, a few pigs, shepherd dogs, cats, and ponies. Two cargoes of the latter go annually from Suderöe to the Shetland

Islands. They are strong hardy little beasts, about twelve and a half hands high; but the natives only use them for riding or for carrying other burdens stowed in baskets slung across their backs, and never for draught.

Rats and mice are the only wild animals found in the islands, and, like Ireland, they enjoy an immunity from the presence of toads, lizards, snakes, or venomous reptiles of any kind; nor are they frequented by any amphibious animals.

Birds of many kinds abound in and around the Feroes, and fowling furnishes the natives with no inconsiderable portion of their food. The descriptions of which we saw the greatest number, were snipe, plover, and crows inland, and gulls, auks guillimots, kittiwakes, and lomvirs on the sea-coast.

Fishery is a great resource to the inhabitants, though ever since the days of Debes they have been complaining of the decrease said to be constantly taking place in the number of fish which frequent the surrounding banks. Whales, cod, halibut, haddock, and sey, are the descriptions caught in salt water, and the lakes and rivers furnish trout and eels, the former of which are said occasionally to attain a considerable size, particularly in a little lake on the north side of Waagöe. The rivers are too small to contain salmon. Seals

were once caught in large numbers in the caves on the coast, but they have become very scarce of late years from the want of any proper laws for their preservation. Landt's account of the Feroe Islands contains a very full list of the birds, fishes, and plants found in and around them.

CHAPTER III.

Monday, 12th June.—The day began with heavy squalls of wind and rain; but towards noon the wind entirely subsided, and the remainder of the day was fine. Mr. Müller came on board to breakfast with us as agreed, at an early hour; but he must have found it a most troubled meal, for few people (unless indeed they happen to have escorted a talkative and curious child through the Sydenham Palace) can form an adequate conception of the fire of questions with which we bored him during the first twenty minutes of our intercourse. An intelligent native who spoke our language as fluently as his own, was an opportunity not to be thrown away in a land not included as yet within the limits of John Murray's Handbooks; and we were anxious to arrange our future plans as speedily as possible. Travelling is after all, far more exciting through countries in which one arrives comparatively ignorant, and we felt very impatient for our first walk on shore. As soon as breakfast was over we landed; and the instant we approached the beach, we were met by a mixed smell of turf smoke and dried fish, which was ever present with us during

the remainder of our stay in the Islands, the clothes of the natives as well as their boats and dwellings being quite saturated with it.

The houses in Thorshaven have one story, and are made of wood (all the timber coming from Copenhagen), and covered outside with tar, which sinking into the pine, gives them a reddish brown colour; they stand on a foundation of loose unhewn stones, carried high enough to reduce the inequalities of the surface to a level, for the ground floor to rest upon. All have good-sized glass windows, and the roofs are formed of boards, covered by birch bark, and then by sods.

But the most interesting feature in their construction is that the outer doors have no locks; a testimony to the honesty of the population, of which no other European capital can boast. The church is a large wooden edifice, in shape like an English church, with a steeple; fitted inside with pine, and divided into pews and galleries. It has an indifferent picture of the crucifixion over the altar, and is in no respect different from wooden Lutheran churches in other parts of northern Europe. This one was lofty enough; but Landt says some of the country churches are so low, that a tall man can but just stand upright between the rafters.

On the eastern point of the bay is a little fort, mounting

M. & N. HANHART LITH.

FERÖESE HOUSE OF THE BEST CLASS.

some six to eight guns, and manned by an amphibious garrison of twenty-eight natives, who serve also as boatmen to the Governor, and constitute the whole military establishment of these peaceful Islands. The men, in spite of their varied occupations, had a fine soldierlike appearance and carried themselves very well.

We only saw one beggar, an old woman, in the course of our walk, though Thorshaven is said to be the chief resort of all the idlers and hangers on. Most of the inhabitants had a well-fed, well-clothed look, which formed a striking contrast to that of too many of the inhabitants of the Scottish islands. Mr. Müller informed us, that the Feroese generally eat fish or flesh twice a day, and deem it a hardship when unable to do so. Most of the men are tall and slightly built, but muscular and usually fair; some of them one might in another dress mistake for Englishmen, while others (we suppose from different parts of the country) have German looking faces, the variety of feature being considerable. The women have for the most part bad figures, as is so often the case in mountainous districts, their waists being thick and heavy, and placed too high in their bodies for symmetry; but their faces are sometimes pretty, and their complexions often very good, having an attractive look of perfect health without any coarse-

ness. Indeed, this female charm is always found in perfection very much in proportion to the dampness of the climate, the sun being its great destroyer.

The costume of the men consists of a pair of tanned skin moccasins, made in one piece, puckered up at the toes and tied by a thong round the ankles; knit worsted stockings, black knee-breeches, a double-breasted waistcoat, and over that a cape fitting nearly tight to the body, with long sleeves of a rusty brown colour, coming down to the hips and buttoned in front. The cape, breeches, and waistcoat are all made of coarse woollen cloth. Some of the wealthier wear linen or cotton shirts, but the poorer people wear a fine white woollen one. Lastly, they have pointed caps of various colours, in shape like the knit night-caps, which Englishmen wore before the habit of sleeping without any came into fashion. When out fishing, they wear an overall suit of tanned skins, and a skin cap with the hair outside. One author compares the dress of the women to that of the Scottish peasantry. At all events, it is not remarkable to an Englishman's eye; but the simplest female costume is composed of so many mysterious parts that we shall not attempt to describe it in detail.

After Mr. Müller had strolled about with us for a couple of hours, showing us the lions of the place, and explaining every-

thing in the most good-humoured manner, he returned home to attend to his public duties, and sent a little boy with us to point out the houses of the different Government officers, on whom we found it was the proper thing to call as soon after our arrival as possible. They are seven in number, all of them except the Sysellman, Danes. We went first to pay our respects to the Governor. His house stands in the middle of the town, and is distinguished from its neighbours by having a roof of Scotch slates instead of sods; it has also a garden in front some forty feet square, in which grow a few stunted trees and currant-bushes. He spoke both French and German, and asked us what our object was in visiting the country; a question which, like many Englishmen abroad, we could not very easily answer, as our expedition had no scientific aims; but he added, that whatever they were, he should be glad to give us every assistance in his power; and nothing could be kinder than his reception was in every way. Thinking he might like to see the internal economy of an English yacht, we arranged with him to dine with us in the evening, and then departed to complete the round of our visits. Our little guide spoke no language we knew; but having been told to which houses to take us, he led us to their doors, at which he knocked, and then handed us over to the charge of the

servant, after explaining who we were. The houses are fitted up much in the style of ordinary German houses; and we were invariably shown into the reception-room, and there left to amuse ourselves by looking at numerous prints of kings of Denmark past and present, which hung upon the walls, until our host or hostess made their appearance. In one or two cases, the husbands being from home, we were received by their wives; and as they knew no common language, a dumb interchange of courtesies ensued, highly embarrassing to both sides, and which we ended as soon as possible by bowing ourselves out. There is no better exercise for a man's social presence of mind than passing through such trying ordeals, but as they were very far from being agreeable, we cut the remainder of our visits short, and sent a message through the Sysellman to ask those of the officers whom we had not called upon in person to meet the Governor at dinner.

At five o'clock they all came, on board the Governor's boat pulled by ten of the garrison in their uniforms, who rowed in beautiful time, and made altogether a very imposing appearance. During dinner the Governor proposed that we should send the yacht to Westmannshaven the next day, go with him in his boat to Qualvig, and cross thence overland to join her. With this agreeable proposition we immediately closed,

and it was also arranged that Mr. Müller should accompany us during our cruise among the fiords, and one of the garrison act as pilot to the vessel.

The conversation at dinner was conducted partly in French and partly in German, our guests occasionally speaking to each other in Danish, and the Sysellman treating us to our native language. It was a sad confusion of tongues, which almost rivalled the last hours of Babel; but as they were all very agreeable well informed men, conversation never flagged; and at nine o'clock they left us, we for our part having spent a very pleasant evening.

While smoking a cigar on deck after our friends were gone, and trying to realise to our minds that it was ten o'clock, for the lights were in exactly the same state as at six o'clock on a fine summer's evening in England, one of the sailors came aft, and touching his hat, drew our attention to a funeral procession which was moving in the direction of a little burial ground outside the town. We instantly ran down for our glasses, intending to send home a minute account of so interesting and touching a ceremony; but on bringing them to bear upon the shore, it proved to be only our own skipper, who having made himself smart had landed for a quiet walk, and whose gold band had procured for him the attendance of

nearly all the children and half the grown up people of the place. Our features which had been screwed up for sympathy, were convulsed with laughter, and Jack went forward, no doubt to tell his comrades how well he had unintentionally sold the "Governor;" for under that paternal title every owner is known in his own forecastle.

Tuesday, 13th June. — In the morning, having directed the captain to make the best of his way to Westmannshaven, round the south-eastern point of Stromöe, we started as arranged over night, with the Governor and Mr. Müller, in the former's boat, for Qualvig. She was a large open boat of the usual build, and was pulled by ten of the garrison, who helped her progress with a small lug-sail, which all the boats use when the wind is fair, but with which, of course, they never attempt to beat. We shall not easily forget the pleasure of that row; everything was so new, and the day was perfect, neither too hot nor too cold, but bright and sunny. There was hardly air enough to fill the sail, and the sea in the fiords was perfectly smooth, while the only perceptible approach to the much-dreaded fogs, was a bluish transparent mist, which partially veiled the mountains, and which was not denser than the haze one often sees on fine days in Switzerland. We could not refrain from telling the Governor how

agreeably the weather so far surprised us, and repeated to him some extracts from the accounts we had read. He laughed heartily at them, and declared that they had sometimes for weeks together an "Italian climate." June is, however, admitted to be the clearest month in the year; July and August being warmer, but more subject to thick weather. The fiord up which our course lay, ran in a north-westerly direction, between Osteröe and Stromöe, and is about two miles broad at the mouth, narrowing to a fourth of that breadth opposite to Qualvig. Both shores are closed in by mountains, with sides descending, in most places abruptly to the water's edge, covered by grass or bog wherever they are not too precipitous to allow the earth to rest; and the monotonous appearance which the total absence of trees, shrubs, or even brushwood, gives to the hills, is only broken by the cows and sheep grazing over them, and here and there a few low grass-roofed cottages fringing the beach. Isolated farm-houses are rare, five or six being generally collected together, making with their turf and cattle sheds, in all a collection of some twenty buildings; the land their occupants cultivate, radiating a short way into the ravine or valley in their rear.

As we rowed along, the Governor pointed out some black dots on the hills, which he informed us were shepherds

driving together the sheep for shearing. This is a very arduous business; immense tracts of mountains being occupied in common by the flocks of all those in the district, who have the right of pasture there. They are allowed to roam both in winter and summer, and strange to say, the flocks of one run seldom stray into the neighbouring runs, unless driven to do so by over-crowding. In summer they are collected together in large spaces, enclosed by stone walls about four feet high, to be shorn; and again in autumn, when a certain number are selected for slaughter.

The cows only sleep out during the summer, and from Michaelmas to May are driven into sheds at night. Even before the Feroe Islands were inhabited, they were used as sheep dépôts by the Norwegian pirates, who introduced them for the convenience of being able in passing to renew their supplies of fresh meat. The boatmen sang us several of their native melodies; and among the airs we were not a little surprised to recognise that of our National Anthem, which came to them originally from Norway, and has long been one of their greatest favourites.

At about one o'clock we arrived at Qualvig, which is a good-sized village, built round the borders of a little bay, and so enclosed on three sides by mountains that the inhabitants

do not see the sun at all, during some of the winter months. In the spring of 1798, they were greatly disconcerted by its showing itself two days before the proper time; an appearance which, we suppose, was caused by an unusual amount of atmospheric refraction. To the Feroese, who were wholly unable to account for the phenomenon, it must have been a very startling one; for it is difficult to conceive anything more uncomfortable than to have one's faith shaken in the regular habits of so important a luminary.

On our arrival we went into the house of the principal farmer, who came out to meet us. He wore his hair in long curls, streaming down his back; a custom now only continued by old men. He was over seventy years of age, but did not look more than fifty, and bid fair to live to a hundred; an age not unfrequently reached in these islands. He showed us into the guest-chamber; a room which is found in all farm-houses of the better sort, set apart exclusively for the use of visitors, as inns or public houses of entertainment of any kind are wholly unknown. It was a good-sized room, but so low that we could not stand upright with our hats on; the walls, floor, and ceiling being all of unpainted pine, scrupulously clean, and containing a recess with a bed, a deal table, an iron stove, several chairs, and a large glass window.

Some of the rooms are, however, by no means so clean as a stranger, who only sees the neat exterior of the houses and the guest-chamber, might be led to suppose. We entered, some days afterwards, at Welbestadt, a small low room devoted to the labourers, which was so full of smoke that we could hardly see across it; and from Landt's description, it was a very fair specimen of the servants' rooms generally. A hole in the roof served in place of a chimney, the fire being laid on some stones upon the floor; and the walls were full of recesses, in which were the beds.

It was formerly the custom for the hostess to appear and receive a kiss from any guests who arrived at her house; but this custom (which at one time prevailed in England, and must be very pleasant, or the contrary, according to circumstances) is now falling into disuse; and we were never called upon either to witness or take part in it.

Our host would only too gladly have also provided the fare, for the hospitality of these Islanders is unbounded; but the Governor had brought an abundant supply, including some excellent cold roast golden plover, to which, after the sea-air, we did full justice.

The house in which we lunched was a small one, having only a single story, like all the Feroese houses; but there

appeared to be several others close to it occupied by the family, and numerous cow and turf sheds were scattered about; all the buildings being constructed in the same way as those at Thorshaven. Other farmsteads were close by, connected together by flagged untidy footpaths, over which some ducks and hens were wandering and rooting among the refuse. Numerous female faces peeped through the windows, anxious to catch a glimpse of the foreigners, and amongst them was one whose refined beauty would have been noticed even in our own favoured land, but her figure we did not see, as like her companions, she was too shy to venture out. About two hours after our arrival, the farmer came in to say that the ponies were ready, which meanwhile his servants had been catching upon the hills, where they are left to wander and pick up what they can, when not wanted for actual use. The Governor's effects, and a few things we had brought with us in case the yacht should fail us, were distributed among the ever useful soldiers; and off we started, alternately walking and riding the ponies, which were extremely surefooted, and scrambled up and down places where even their Welsh brethren would have been puzzled.

Our path was at first very steep, and led us up a mountain 1000 to 1500 feet high, which formed one end of a narrow

uninhabited valley, enclosed in every direction by steep rugged hills, the sides of which were intersected by innumerable little torrents and waterfalls. Where the slope of the rocks was at all gradual a little grassy turf grew, but in most places they were entirely bare of either earth or verdure; and the whole scene equalled in gloomy desolation the wildest parts of Scotland, not excepting even Loch Corruskin in Skye; yet the Governor pointed it out to us with the remark, "Voici, Messieurs, ce que sont les Feroes," assuring us that it was a very fair specimen of the general character of the interior; which seems everywhere to be filled by extremely precipitous mountains, separated from one another by narrow desert valleys, or to speak more correctly by deep ravines, the bottoms of which are laid waste by the stones and sand carried into them during the winter rains. They are always uninhabited, as the whole population live on the coasts; indeed they are quite unfit for the abodes of men. Mr. Müller drew our attention to the lichen tartarirus growing on some of the stones; a kind of lichen called by the Feroese korke, which is very extensively used by them for dyeing woollen cloth. When growing it looks quite white; but if wet and crushed in the hands, the reddish purple dye it contains

shows itself, and the natives extract this colour from it in a great variety of shades, by a very elaborate process.

After crossing a boggy plain, which contained two small lakes about 1500 feet above the level of the sea, we skirted the sides of an almost perpendicular mountain, until we opened a view of the bay in which Westmannshaven is situated, and then descended towards the village by the side of a small river, which tumbles over a series of steps or terraces, each about forty feet square, and so regular, that they resemble vast artificial waterworks in a state of ruin. On our way we crossed the beds of endless watercourses, now fortunately dry, but which after rain must make inland travelling almost impossible. In them we found several specimens of zeolites, for which, as well as chalcedonies, these Islands are so celebrated. Soon after commencing our descent the clouds opened, and we saw the perpendicular sides of Mygenaes towering up in the distance beyond Waagöe, and looking three times their real height, owing to the deceptive lights which characterised the afternoon, and on the accidental state of which the imposingness of scenery so much depends. About six o'clock we reached the Government storehouse, this being one of their trading stations, opposite to which was a little fifty-ton smack taking in cargo;

and at a little distance, we were glad to notice the "Maria" lying quietly at anchor, with all her sails stowed away, having arrived several hours before us from Thorshaven. The store-keeper invited us into his house, where we found the captain of the smack and another person connected with the establishment, and were served with coffee and light French wine, which may be had cheaper in this country than in England. Here we parted for a time with the Governor and Sysellman, who went for the night to some friends in the village, and proceeded on board the yacht, which we found in charge of a handsome military-looking man in uniform, with a corporal's stripes on his arms, who informed us he was one of the garrison of the fort, and the pilot whom the Governor had kindly placed at our disposal during our cruise, and that he had brought the vessel round from Thorshaven. He spoke a few words of English, and on nautical matters had succeeded in making himself fully understood to the captain and men on the voyage. During the evening we fired our great gun, to try the echoes, which were particularly good. The noise brought a number of boats alongside, filled with the villagers, anxious to see and examine the vessel; and after their departure, we all went below with the comfortable feeling that here no anchor-watch was necessary to provide for the

chance of a stranger craft fouling us during the night. In a few minutes we were made aware that the crew were turning the quiet night to good purpose; for the whole vessel seemed to resound with their deep and varied snores. All ordinary snoring sinks into the shade compared to that of a sailor who happens to roll on to his back in a hammock; and the perfect quiet of a yacht at anchor in smooth water, gives every body on board, in whatever part of the vessel they may be, an ample opportunity of appreciating it. About midnight we ourselves went on deck again, to see how the weather promised. Dark clouds were rolling over head, and the wind, which had been light all day, was now howling down the ravines which intersected the steep sides of the barren mountains that surrounded the bay. The whole scene was extremely gloomy, and almost depressing; and made us a little uneasy as to the chances of fine weather the next day, which was essential to us to enable us to see the West Coast to advantage.

CHAPTER IV.

Wednesday, 14th June.—At seven o'clock A. M., the Governor left Westmannshaven in a native boat, calling at the yacht in passing to bid us good bye, and returned to Thorshaven by the way the "Maria" had come: we were sorry to lose his society, which added greatly to the pleasure of the day before. We then engaged a native boat in which to visit parts of the coast more nearly than we dared to do in the yacht's gig, and taking it in tow, we steered northwards, skirting the island of Stromöe.

A grander coast cannot be conceived. For more than ten miles it is a perpendicular wall, varying in height from 1000 to 2000 feet, and presenting in that distance only one little bay where landing is practicable. Many cliffs which appear a short way off to project from it like buttresses, prove on a nearer approach to be entirely detached, and to admit of a boat passing between them and the mainland. Any person who is content merely to sail along this coast in a vessel at a respectful distance, will form a very imperfect idea of either its wonders or size. The rocks are intersected by deep rents

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MYLING HEAD AS SEEN FROM THE SOUTH.

8100 FEET HIGH.

or fissures, and in many places pierced by long caverns, in the far recesses of which the ground swell of the ocean breaks and surges with a sullen roar, which even in smooth weather may be heard miles off; while in winter the sea is said to be occasionally forced into them with a violence that shakes the ground perceptibly, and causes a tremendous report. It is in some of these caves, which have a beach at the innermost extremity, that the kind of seals called the *Phoca hispida* breed and are killed by the Feroese, though their number has greatly diminished of late years. Two boats are generally considered necessary for this sport; one of them containing a crew armed with clubs, and provided with torches made of old linen twisted, and dipped in tallow, enters the cave, the aperture of which is often so small that the men have to stoop in order to do so; while the other remains at the mouth, and the two are connected together with a rope, by means of which the outside men are enabled to pull their comrades' boat back, in the event of its being filled with water by the surf and breakers in the cavern, an accident which not unfrequently occurs. If the men reach the dry end of the cave where the seals are lying in safety, they attack the males first, concealing their torches as long as possible, lest the glare of them should make them endeavour to escape into

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the water, which they often succeed in doing, leaving the females, who remain with their young, to their fate. When unable to reach the water, the grown-up seals sometimes rear themselves up, and snatch the clubs with their mouths out of the hands of their assailants. Generally, however, the natives succeed in stunning them by a tremendous blow on the snout, and after cutting their throats they go further up the cave, where the young ones remain unconsciously awaiting their doom. The skins of the young seals are made into tobacco-pouches, and those of the old ones either tanned and made into shoes, or stripped off whole, dried with the hair on, and made into bags for carrying clothes in like our carpet bags. Our pilot used a bag of this kind. The fat is melted into oil, but the flesh is seldom eaten, though it is said not to be as strong or coarse as many of the staples of Feroese diet. Seal-killing in caves is only carried on at particular periods of the year, just before the young ones take to the water, and was not in season during our visit. Another kind of seal, the *Phoca vitulina*, is shot by the natives when lying asleep on the banks.

With the exception of one or two short showers, the day was favourable for seeing the scenery, being calm, clear, and fine. A few miles from Westmannshaven we left the yacht,

under orders to stand off and on the land, and visited in a native boat a remarkable Vogelberg, or resort of sea-fowl, situated in a narrow sound, between a tremendous precipice on the coast, and several detached crags, which evidently, from their shape, once formed part of the mainland; but have been torn from it by some convulsion of nature, and now stand isolated in the sea. The effect of passing through this strait between two perpendicular walls, not more than fifteen yards apart, one of which is 700 and the other 1500 feet high, is very imposing. It would make a weak head giddy to look up and see the largest gulls diminishing to mere specks before they reach the summit of the lowest side. In this sheltered spot cormorants, gulls, kittiwakes, auks, guillimots, and puffins build in incredible numbers. The nests are placed on shelves formed where the soft strata has been washed away, each species taking a line of its own at various elevations, the puffins building on the highest ridges; the females sit in myriads, so close together as to touch one another. A place of this kind is so valuable a possession to the people in whose district it is situated, that strangers are not allowed to take fowl there, nor are the owners permitted to shoot them lest they should frighten too many away. We were not fortunate enough to see the fowlers at work, but the birds are caught in

the same way as at St. Kilda and other of the Scotch islands. The dangers attendant upon this occupation are much exaggerated, and accidents in the present day very seldom occur. Peter Clausen, the Norwegian annalist, however, mentions a curious law that existed in old times, which forbad the body of a man who was killed fowling being buried in consecrated ground, unless his nearest kinsman was willing to ascend to the spot whence he fell. It was otherwise considered he had brought his end upon himself by tempting the Almighty. This law is the more remarkable, as it evidently had its source in the same feeling as the one relative to the interment of suicides which has continued to our own times.

On leaving the Vogelberg, we rowed along the coast as far as Saxen, a village situated in a little inlet of the sea, the entrance to which is through a gorge between two precipices about 1000 feet high, and not more than 200 feet apart. Some years ago, an abandoned vessel, which was never claimed, supposed to have been bound to Liverpool from Philadelphia, was blown through this passage into the bay without touching either side, and her timbers still remain buried in the sand. From Saxen we pulled out to the yacht, and continued our course northwards, dismissing the native boat, for which we did not then foresee further use. At three

o'clock P. M. we were opposite the Myling Head, the highest perpendicular precipice in the Feroes: indeed, it is more than perpendicular, for it overhangs the sea. We stood in under it, until it appeared as if we could throw a biscuit on shore, although we were really a full mile off, for heights and distances are here even more deceptive than in the clear atmosphere of Switzerland; and in this matter we were constantly deceived, although past experience had put us on our guard. We had intended to ascend the Myling Head from Tiornevig, but the day was so fine and clear that we determined not to lose so good an opportunity; and now much regretted we had sent away the Westmannshaven boat, as we doubted whether our own sailors would be able to find a landing-place. There was, however, a fishing-boat in the distance, to which we gave chase. So unaccustomed were the men in her to foreigners, that they took advantage of the light wind to keep away from us, and would not come alongside till they saw their countrymen, Mr. Müller and the pilot, on board. The crew consisted of only one man and two boys; and although their boat was unusually small, they readily agreed to put us on shore; so we stepped carefully into it, having arranged that the yacht should proceed to Eide, a village at no great distance in Osteröe, and anchor there. The scenery around was on such

a scale that the yacht looked like a ten ton vessel as she glided slowly out of sight behind Stakken Point, with barely sufficient breeze to fill her sails, leaving us in the overloaded boat sitting as still as possible, with a nervous feeling that the slightest false move would upset us. We landed in a little bay that runs in a south-easterly direction behind the Myling Head, and the Sysellman sent the native boat to a village near, to procure a larger one in which to proceed to Eide in the evening. As already said, the western face of the Myling Head overhangs the sea, but its summit is accessible from this bay by an even grassy ascent, so steep as to be barely practicable. We toiled slowly up it, and when near the summit, consisting of a sharp ridge formed between this side and the overhanging face of the cliffs, dropped upon our hands and knees, and, creeping to the edge, looked down 2100 feet into the sea below. A stone which we dropped was more than eight seconds in falling, when we lost sight of it in the glare of the water.

Woe betide the unfortunate man who is attacked by nightmare within ten days of gazing from that giddy height. He will assuredly pass hours of troubled sleep in whirling through the air, clinging even to the sea-fowl in the desperate effort to arrest his fate, and catching his breath

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MYLING HEAD AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH
2100 FEET HIGH.

with a short sigh of terror as he fancies himself each moment about to be buried in the waves rolling at its base.

In returning, our descent would have been much facilitated by a pewter dish, on which we so well remember in times gone by, sliding down the slopes of our native lawns. Even without one, a member of our party descended a great part of the way, by simply sitting down, to the infinite amusement of the boatmen below, who must have wondered whether that was a common mode of locomotion with the foreigners, and probably envied the durability of clothes which could stand such a test.

We measured the height of the Myling Head by the aneroid barometer, and found it to be 2100 feet, which is 400 feet less than the height generally assigned to it. On reaching the bottom we found a fine large boat waiting for us containing twelve men, who with the ever-ready hospitality of Feroese, did not wish to receive any money for taking us to Eide, but only asked to be shown over the vessel, about every part of which they were extremely curious. On our way there we passed between an isolated rock called Stakken, and the main land, forming between them a gorge the two sides of which are parallel, and more than 800 feet high. The precipice on the land side over-

hung the passage so much, that we rowed between its base and some cascades which fell from its summit into the sea, and the extent to which this cliff leant over, corresponded exactly to the back slope of the opposite one, while all the inequalities in their respective faces would have fitted into each other exactly, if the detached crag could have been again placed on to its parent headland.

> "Heights that appear as lovers who have parted
> In hate, whose mining depths so intervene
> That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted."

At the termination of this gorge, we came in sight of two curiously-shaped isolated rocks, which rise out of the water to the height of several hundred feet just opposite to Kodlen, a perpendicular headland 1200 feet high, at the north-western extremity of Osteröe. One of these rocks is perforated by a natural Gothic arch, which resembling very faintly the appearance of a man with his legs stretched out, has procured for it the name of the giant; while the other, through which no daylight can be seen, is called his wife.

We reached Eide, a large village beautifully situated, at about six o'clock P. M., but did not land, and were only too glad to remain quiet after a hard day's work.

Thursday, 15th June. — We sailed from this place early in

the morning, and entered the fiord between Osteröe and Kalsöe, but the wind falling away, the tide set the yacht seawards again. While she was drifting about, we visited in the gig another Vogelberg, close to Kadlenen Head, where the rocks were literally white with kittiwakes. It is not, however, very safe to boat without a native guide, for although the dangers of the whirlpools among the Feroes have been greatly exaggerated in the old accounts, there not being one to compare in strength to Corryvrechan, the tide sweeps through the narrower fiords and round projecting points at times with overwhelming force. While looking at the myriads of fowls buzzing about, the Sysellman observed that we were being insidiously swept towards some sunken rocks surrounded by an eddy, and it was evident that the current increased in strength as it approached them. Our attention being called to the danger in time, we pulled away without difficulty; but a boat full of inexperienced hands might easily "come to grief" by being drawn into a current too far to recede. We returned to the yacht, which meantime had been helplessly carried out to sea, and lay entirely becalmed, where we amused ourselves for some time with fishing, and caught some cod. At noon, a slight breeze sprang up, and enabled us to enter the fiord between the

islands of Kunöe and Kalsöe, both of which are little more than long mountain ridges, rising to the height of 2000 feet above the water, with very steep and frequently frightfully barren sides, bare of earth from top to bottom. Their north-western extremities, and indeed those of nearly the whole group, are terminated by perpendicular headlands from 1000 to 1500 feet high. The shapes of the mountains in the northern islands are exceedingly various, and most of them are very remarkable. The summits are sometimes extremely sharp and rugged, and broken into the most fantastic outlines; others again are conical, and surmounted by a level plain. This latter is the case with Slatterkind, the highest mountain in Osteröe, which has an elevation of 2900 feet. Occasionally the hills assume a pyramidical shape, so regular that it is difficult for the mind to realise that they are not the work of man's hands, while their naked sides display the various strata ranged parallel to one another at equal distances with almost mathematical precision. But whatever their form is, their sides are invariably precipitous; so much so, that in Kalsöe and Kunöe there are only four or five practicable landing-places, and some of these are very inconvenient. The village of Mygledahl, in the former island, for instance, is perched up

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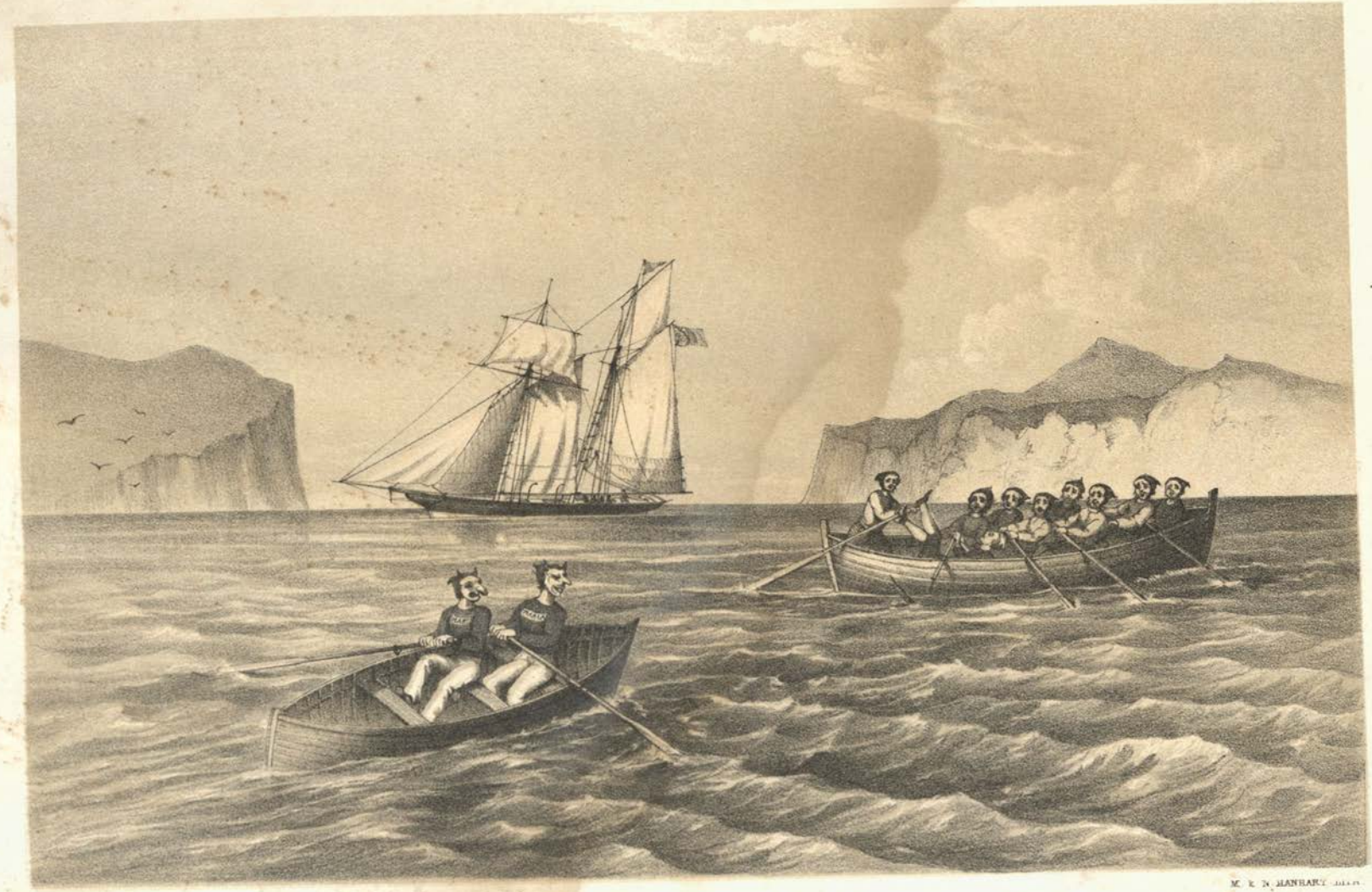
THE NORTHERN TERMINATION OF THE ISLAND OF KALSÖE



ASTONISHING THE NATIVES.

at a height of more than sixty feet above the sea; and the boats kept there have to be lowered by ropes into the water. Its land communication is hardly more easy, for the mountains which enclose its rear are only passable by one dangerous path. Observing that two boats had put off from this village, and were reconnoitring us at a most respectful distance, we determined to try the effect of two hideous masks upon their unsophisticated minds. Accordingly two boys duly decorated with them, and in their red yachting caps, were sent off in the punt. The smaller of the native boats beat a retreat directly she saw ours lowered; but the crew of the other, which was larger, consisting of ten men, pulled boldly up to welcome the strangers, and as they neared took off their hats. Our hearts smote us when we witnessed this politeness, but it was too late; the boats had drifted close to each other, and our boys, who had not yet shown their faces, turned round to return the salute. The effect was electrical; in an instant the ten caps were replaced upon their respective heads, and the owners of them were pulling away as if for their lives. The sea-serpent himself could not have created a greater sensation, and our two urchins, who chased the Feroese some little way, were soon distanced. The different sizes of the boats and their crews formed a most ludicrous contrast; and probably

the small stature of the boys made them the more alarming, as Landt enumerates among the list of spectres supposed to haunt the Feroes, Niagruisars, or "small beings in human form, with red caps on their heads, which are supposed to bring good fortune to the place where they have taken up their abode." We never tried any more tricks on the natives, and felt half ashamed of this one when we saw the extremity of their fears.

We had a good opportunity in this fiord of seeing the curious habits of the skua gull. This bird, which is the highwayman of the air, never catches fish for itself, but procures food by persecuting its smaller brethren when they have just swallowed one, until they vomit it, when the skua gull drops down and picks it up. One of them, intent upon its dirty livelihood, hunted a small sea-fowl unsuccessfully round and round the "Maria's" masts for several minutes, until at last we got a double-barrelled gun to bear on him, and with the first discharge brought him flop into the sea, to the great delight of the pilot, while the intended victim flew screaming away too much astonished to appreciate his escape.

The wind became so light in the afternoon that we anchored in the bay of Waal, in the island of Bordöe, opposite the village of that name, fearing that the return tide might other-

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SOUTH EASTERN POINT OF KUNOE

AS SEEN FROM WAAL BAY

wise carry us back. This bay is closed in by the southernmost head of Kunöe, a mountain of the same shape, and almost as regular and formal, as the great pyramid at Cairo, while a number of equal-sized steps up its sides greatly increases the resemblance. Waal is one of the three government trading stations; but the reader must not suppose that on this account the bay was crowded with shipping, for not a vessel was to be seen, and three or four annual visits of a fifty-ton smack suffice for the commerce of the place. The head trading station is at Thorshaven, and hence the little smack brings foreign articles, returning with the native ones to be made up, with those of other stations, into cargoes for the schooners to take to Copenhagen. On landing, the government factor met us, and offered to show us the stores: he was a native of Suderöe, and had there picked up a little English. We followed him through three or four wooden sheds, about the size of small English barns; each leading description of merchandise having a room devoted to it, while the middle one was fitted up as a regular shop with a counter, scales, &c.

The government seem to deal direct with the consumers and producers by retail, without the intervention of shops or middlemen, and thus many intermediate profits are saved to the inhabitants.

For many years, the opening of the trade of these Islands to general competition, has been the subject of discussion in Denmark, but as yet no steps have been taken in that direction, and it may be questioned whether it would be wise so to do. No doubt the present system is in direct violation of all the established maxims of political economists, and tends to isolate the inhabitants from intercourse with other nations, as well as to prevent the full development of their resources; nor can there be a doubt that the Feroes might be made to support a more numerous population. The people are however so well off, that we believe the actual yield of happiness and innocence per acre, in proportion to the fertility of the soil, to be greater than that of any other European country. Extravagance with its attendant crimes is not bred by foreign example; the variety of their occupations, consequent upon the absence of all division of labour, renders them very intelligent, and they are besides religious, well fed, and contented. Their great fault is an indifference, almost a repugnance, to the introduction of improvements into their methods of fishing, manufacturing, and farming; and this no doubt is a great evil, attributable to their peculiar circumstances; but it seems to us far more than compensated by their many blessings. After looking through the stores we took a walk,

and shot some snipe, with which the valley abounds. The farmer on whose grounds we were, at first objected, until we agreed to pay him a trifle for each bird we killed. His countrymen appeared rather ashamed of his demands, as the birds were of no value to him, and thought it necessary to apologise for his conduct, on the ground that he was a little cracky. In the evening several of the inhabitants came off to see the vessel; and indeed, wherever we anchored, we were almost as much of a show as the Chinese junk in England. We had some heavy showers towards night, but all the previous part of the day was as fine as a summer's day in England.

CHAPTER V.

Friday and Saturday, 16th and 17th June.—As we were not destined to see our beds at night, we treat these two days as a single continuous one. The morning was spent by the crew in watering, and by us in writing below; and at mid-day we left Waal, and after a sail, during which nothing remarkable occurred, arrived at Thorshaven, at four o'clock in the afternoon. We had hardly let go our anchor, and were leisurely stowing away the sails, when our attention was attracted by a man running into the town, where his arrival created great commotion. It was evident he brought important news, which seemed to fly through the place; for we could see the people on shore running to and fro, while all the boats on the beach were hastily got ready for use. Mr. Müller knew directly, by so much bustle, that there must be whales in some of the fiords; and being obliged to superintend the division of all those taken in his district, he urged us not to lose a moment in landing and accompanying him to the scene of action. Our boat was lowered in double quick time, for we had read such graphic accounts of whale hunts in the

Feroes, that we were longing above all things to see one. These whales are not the large Greenland species, but a much smaller fish, about twenty-four feet long at maturity, with an extreme girth of twelve feet, known in the Shetland Isles as the Caaing whale. Though usually spoken of as whales, they are in reality a kind of gigantic dolphin, which follows a leader in large herds or shoals of from fifty to one thousand, and have in consequence been christened by Dr. Traill, of Edinburgh, the *Delphinus deductor;* while Cuvier gave them the name of *Delphinus globioceps*, from the round shape of their heads. When they are seen approaching any island, messengers are despatched, and hay fires lighted on the hills, to summon aid; while the boats close at hand drive them, by shouting and splashing the water, into the nearest convenient bay, and keep them there until men arrive in sufficient numbers to begin the onslaught. We found the whales, in this instance, were being hunted into the harbour of Westmannshaven, a place sixteen miles distant by water; so that, to save a long row round the south-eastern promontory of Stromöe, we crossed two miles of boggy mountain to Welbestadt, and there procured a boat to take us the rest of the way.

The fiords, usually so quiet and lonely, were now dotted all

over by boats hastening to the spot, their crews rowing against one another in famous spirits; for, besides the capture of a herd of whales affording a valuable supply of food for the winter, the Feroese enjoy the excitement of the chase as much as we do a fox-hunt or horse-race. The row from Welbestadt occupied three hours—a time spent by us in a state of great suspense lest the whales should have been killed, or escaped before our arrival; and as soon as we opened Westmannshaven bay, we looked eagerly up it to reassure ourselves that we were not too late. There we espied them, to our great delight, just perceptible in the distance, spouting numerous jets of water. It was a most curious sight, and the scenery was well calculated to set it off to advantage. The bay is about three miles long by three quarters of a mile broad, and surrounded by steep rugged mountains, which looked particularly gloomy in the sombre twilight. Between the whales and the outlet to the sea, fully sixty boats were collected together, with crews of six or eight men each, who were lying lazily on their oars, while about a hundred natives, on either side, were employed in dragging a net of ropes, some five hundred yards long, across the entrance. This net is only used in Westmannshaven, where there are no sloping shallows upon which to drive the whales; it is, of course, not in-

tended to catch them in, for no net could be made sufficiently strong, but it is supposed to retard their escape when they attempt to get out to sea. The boats were the ordinary ones in common use; the only difference observable in them being, that they had now lances stuck upright, like masts, at the stem and stern, and attached to the benches by several fathoms of rope. More boats came dropping in for some time after our arrival, until at eleven o'clock we counted the number up to ninety; so that, including the men on shore, not fewer than eight hundred must have been present—all of them dressed in the rusty brown jackets and black knee breeches of the country, with as much uniformity as a regiment of soldiers. The net was drawn farther and farther up the bay, great care being taken to avoid frightening the whales, who swam quietly before it, or rolled about at their ease, evidently quite unconscious of danger. When matters seemed approaching to a crisis, our party separated. Each of us got into a boat, and stood in the bows with a lance in our hands ready for action, and the fray commenced. Half of the boats remained outside the net to support the buoys, and the remainder, about fifty in number including ours, closed round their prey, and drove them, by shouting and throwing stones, towards the shore, the animals tamely submitting until they got close to it.

They then turned, evidently in great alarm, and bore down upon us, looking most formidable, and surrounded by a great wave, which their impetus carried with them. Not knowing how the boats would behave, we tyros awaited the charge with no small misgivings, under an assumed air of great calmness. The natives, on the other hand, became frantic with excitement, yelling like maniacs, splashing the water with their spears, and seeming about to throw themselves into it, in the intense desire to head them back. All their efforts, however, were to no purpose. The whole herd broke through our ranks, though they were severely speared in passing. Many of the boats were lifted half out of the water in the collisions; while the cries of the boatmen, mingling with the loud blowing of the whales, made a wild and not inappropriate chorus, which rang through the surrounding hills. When clear of us, the animals continued their career at the same rapid pace, and came in contact with the net, which they carried back, as well as all the line of boats supporting it, several yards; and in a few seconds escaped, either under or through it, leaving a few of their number entangled in its folds, lashing the water up twenty and thirty feet high, in their desperate struggles to disengage themselves. In the end they all got away, and swam half a mile out towards the sea,

when they dived under water, and remained nearly a minute out of sight. We then pulled after them as fast as we could. The scene resembled an enormous regatta, with a herd of whales as the turning buoy; and by dint of stones and shouts, they were headed back, again speared, and again broke through all the barriers opposed to them.

This operation was repeated three times. At last, much wounded and harassed, they were forced into a narrower part of the bay. All their enemies pressed round them at once; and the animals, either wild with fear, or completely bewildered as to the direction of the sea, dashed towards the shore, carrying many of the boats with them in the rush. On a flatter beach they would all at once have been stranded; but this was so steep and rocky, that, after two or three minutes' mêlée, during which the boats and whales were all mixed up together in one fighting, struggling wave, only one-third of them were killed, and the remainder reached deep water again. The real sport was, however, over, and what followed was merely a sickening, though useful, piece of butchery, in which we took no part. Those which were not taken, having lost their leader, never reunited, but rolled groaning in the bay, quite blinded in their own blood, and thus fell victims in detail to their pursuers. When a whale is sufficiently wounded

and exhausted to be manageable, a boat is run alongside, and one of the men strikes a hook into the blubber, attached to a strong rope, by means of which the rest of the crew hold their boat fast to it, while a knife, stuck deep in behind the head, soon terminates its sufferings. Others, on shore, hook and despatch the whales which get aground in the same manner. After the herd was completely broken up and separated, we landed, and from a commanding cliff viewed with advantage the strange spectacle below. The bay was, without exaggeration, red with blood: some boats were towing dead whales on shore; others were spearing the few remaining lively ones; while all round the beach, men, up to their necks in the water, were actively engaged in the great work of slaughter. Occasionally the boatmen would hook one more lively than they supposed it to be, which would tow their boat rapidly about, or break away from them, or lie lashing up clouds of water in its agony. Not a single fish escaped. The few that had an opportunity of doing so, returned in search of their leader, and shared the fate of their companions; and in two hours from the commencement the whole 212 were destroyed. When it was over, we accompanied the Sysellman to the factor's house; and the boats congregated in front, their crews laughing and singing, and waiting until the tide left the stranded carcasses dry, when the

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WHALE HUNTING IN WESTMANNSHAVEN BAY.

division was to be made. From two to three thousand whales are annually captured in the Islands; and shoals are frequently secured with much less trouble than the one we witnessed, particularly in shallower bays. We believe boats are seldom upset in the conflict, as they are not lifted out of the water high enough to be capsized; in fact, the object of the animals being escape, and not attack, they generally endeavour to slip under the boats, and seldom come head on. Some of the blubber is melted into oil, and part of it, as well as the meat, is eaten either fresh or dried. After a great catch, the natives feast to such an extent that their faces, it is said, actually "glance with the blubber which oozes out at every pore."

The solid flesh has been compared to coarse, tasteless beef; and we took away a piece, fully intending to try it; but before we had it cooked, the meat became so high that we were obliged to throw it overboard, where, no doubt, it became food for other fishes, and has, perhaps, ere now figured in the shape of salt cod on the fast-day table of some pious French Catholic. We did not remain to see the division of the spoil, but hired the first boat we found at liberty; and, leaving Mr. Müller to fulfil his laborious task, set out on our return to Thorshaven, just as a lovely morning broke through the grey twilight, which in these latitudes takes the place of

night. The passage between Stromöe and Waagöe, through which the first part of our course lay, is a narrow strait, bounded on each side by frowning precipices, and possessing an abundant share of the stern and rugged character which so peculiarly distinguishes the Feroes. There was, strange to say, not a breath of wind to agitate the fiords, which, now restored to their accustomed solitude, reflected the overhanging rocks on their unrippled surface; and the quiet grandeur of the scene, softened by all the beauty of a cloudless summer's sunrise, was doubly impressive, after the tumultuous chase in which we had spent great part of the night. We passed, though at some distance, a pinnacle of rock, which rises out of the water at the eastern extremity of Waagöe, called from its shape the Troldkonfingeren, or Witch's Finger, and which Landt estimates as 1,200 feet high. An adventurous fowler once ascended and descended it in safety; but having left his pipe at the top, he repeated the experiment, and fell a victim to his rashness. As we rowed along, we were startled by a loud rushing noise, which, on looking round, we found was the blowing of a large Greenland whale, about 400 yards distant, which had followed a shoal of herrings into the fiord, and was no doubt swallowing hundreds of them at each gulp. The Feroese never venture to assail these

formidable monsters; but they occasionally catch another species of whale (the *Balæna rostrata*, about thirty feet long), by a very curious process, at least, if the current accounts are to be believed. It is too large to be directly attacked, and has to be approached with great caution. When sufficiently near, the boatmen scratch its back with an oar (we presume on the principle of tickling trout); and while thus amused, a hook made fast to a rope on shore is stuck in its blubber, by means of which the animal is finally secured, after being lanced until it is quite exhausted. Some accounts go the length of saying, that the animal remains so quiescent while its back is scratched, that the natives are enabled to cram their woollen mittens into its nostrils, and thus prevent its sinking.

We left the boat at Welbestadt, and walking across the hills, arrived on board the yacht at Thorshaven, at eight o'clock, very hungry, and too much tired by the night's work to land again during the remainder of the morning; indeed, as we intended to sail for Scotland in the evening, there were many preparations to make on board. At five o'clock in the afternoon we went to dine, by appointment, with the governor, and met at his house his wife, several other ladies, and most of the officials. After dinner the ladies and gentlemen

retired simultaneously into the drawing-room, and, according to the Danish custom, shook hands with their host and one another, not preparatory to their immediate departure, but merely as an expression of the cordial feelings which animate them at the termination of that social meal. Coffee and cigars were then served; and while we were sitting talking, we saw from the window the yacht, under full sail, stand out into the Sound, and heave to there to await us. We had told the captain to get under weigh, in order to save time, if the wind was fair, and we accordingly bid our kind friends farewell, and followed in the gig. It was not without sincere regret that we parted with the governor, after all his kindness to us, particularly as it is so improbable we shall ever meet him again. Mr. Müller had not returned from Westmannshaven, so we did not see him, and had no opportunity of thanking him for the invaluable services he had rendered us. When we got on board we hoisted up our boats and ensign, fired a salute of three guns, which the fort very handsomely returned by one of five; and then putting the helm to windward, we wore round, and stood away before a light fair breeze, homeward-bound.

The wind continued to freshen, and the evening was so lovely that we staid late on deck, unwilling to take our parting look at islands where we had spent such a happy week. A

period of time appears long or short so much more in proportion to the number of new events crowded into it, than to the number of hours which elapse, that we found it difficult to realise that it was only six days since we had rounded Scraal Head, then arrayed in the magnificence of storm and mists, but now looking very different, and not half so grand, in the varied hues of a calm sunset.

We had been most fortunate in our weather, and seen more of the Feroes in six days than might often be seen in as many weeks (for in few other countries is the traveller so dependent upon the elements, as it is impossible to move except by water); but our time had been cut much too short by unforeseen delays, which had retarded our departure from England. Indeed, of the worst side of the Feroese climate we had no experience. The nights we passed there were showery and chilly, but the days fine and clear. Our inquiries led us to believe that they are not more subject to fogs than many places in the Baltic; and we felt none of those capricious squalls which at times blow off the west coast when the wind is easterly, and which have attracted the attention of passing mariners by their extraordinary suddenness and violence. The cause and origin of these squalls has, we believe, never been satisfactorily explained. The whirlwinds, for which the Islands are so notorious, we are inclined to think, from

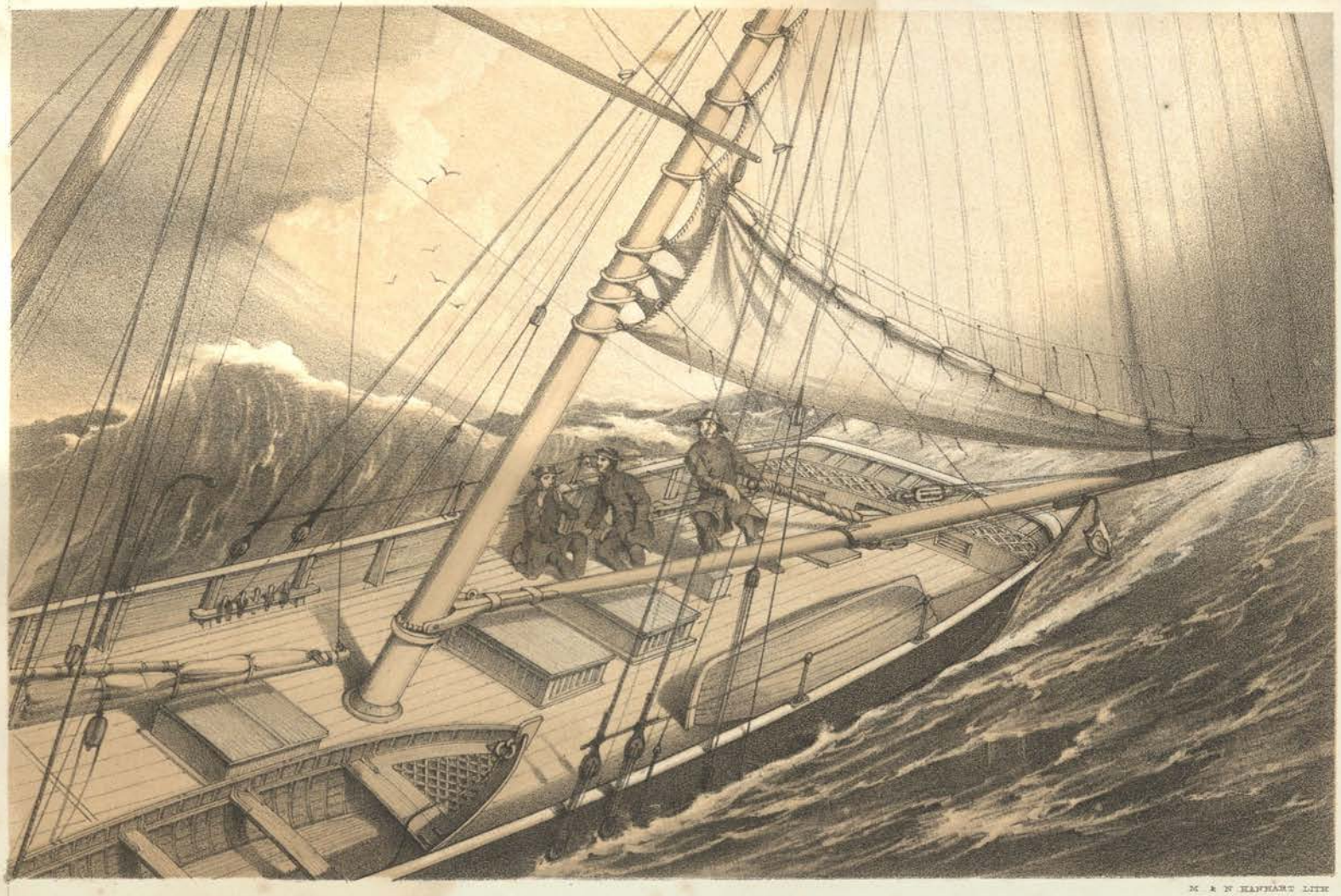
all we heard, are confined to certain localities, and caused more by the peculiar shape of the rocks in such places than by any particular state of the atmosphere. Mr. Müller had never witnessed any in the surrounding seas, and those Debes alludes to seem, from his description, to have been water-spouts.

At eleven o'clock we were opposite the Great Diamond, an island preeminent, even in the Feroes, for its inaccessible sides. It is in the possession of a single farmer, who, with his family and dependants, number about twenty, and compose its entire population. Having no beach, they are unable to keep a boat of their own, and when they want one are obliged to signal for it to a neighbouring island, by making a hay fire on a conspicuous place. Some years ago they allowed all their fires to go out, and paid the penalty of their carelessness by remaining six weeks without in mid-winter. Necessity is the mother of invention, as the old saying goes; and they finally attracted attention by stripping all the turf off the side of a hill, which so much excited the curiosity of their neighbours that a boat was sent to see what the Storr Diamond people could be about. It is only in very calm weather that the island can be approached at all; and for weeks together its little community are confined to their rock-bound prison, without any possibility of leaving it. The

clergyman of the parish to which they belong, as already said, only ventures to visit them once a-year; and no doubt, as things are valued very much in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining them, his hearers are not the less attentive, after the exertion of hoisting him up from his boat many hundred feet in a basket. The farmer who leases the Storr Diamond is one of the richest men in the Feroes. The rent is not more than fifty dollars a year, yet the pastures support about forty oxen and five hundred sheep, besides which, the rocks excel all the other Vogelbergs in the number of seafowl which are caught there. Debes, in the Feroe Reserata, relates a dark tragedy which once occurred on this island. The farmer was murdered by his wife, who "had kept secret" love with one of the labourers; yet the coasts are such strong natural fortifications, that it was long before the authorities of Thorshaven could bring the delinquents to justice. At last the other servants, tired of keeping watch incessantly, to protect those in whose guilt they had not participated, became careless; the island was taken by surprise, and the culprits received the just punishment of their crimes.

Sunday, June 18th.— The wind rose during the night, hauling gradually round to the eastward; and after we turned in, a gurgling sound under our pillows, so well known to yachtsmen's ears, told us we were moving rapidly through the

water. Soon after midnight we sighted the Monk rock, which the mate, who had the watch at the time, said had been correctly described, as looking, at a distance, like a vessel under sail. It is situated about five miles to the south of Suderöe, and was our last glimpse of the Feroe Islands. The sea, which rises in the Northern Ocean with very little encouragement, is very cross and irregular; and when we began to shave and dress in the morning, it unmistakeably reminded us that we were no longer in port; while breakfast, in spite of all the advantages of a most scientifically-planned swing table, would have tasked the dexterity of a Chinese juggler. There is no place like the sea for testing the difference between theoretical and practical contrivances. Unhappy will be the man whose faith is in patents. Five hundred inventions, which are the admiration of every body in the placid limits of a dock, prove miserable failures with the first heavy roll. At eleven o'clock the day became drizzly, the wind became due east, and for several hours blew so hard that we had to double reef the mainsail, and take in the fore and staysails. Both the wind and waves were abeam, so that the vessel lurched very heavily to leeward; and the possibility of shipping a sea obliged us to put coverings on the skylights and burn candles in the cabin, in spite of which the water poured in occasionally through the combings. Among other little mischances, the



M. & N. HANHART LITH

DECK SCENE IN THE NORTHERN OCEAN.

galley chimney was knocked off by an accident, and the whole vessel filled with a mixed smell of coke smoke, and cooking; then away went a harness cask, emptying a Cheshire cheese and all our potatoes into the lee scuppers; and happy is the man whose favourite dog does not take refuge in the after lockers, and come out yelling with a fish hook fast in his skin. The simple truth is, that a yacht in a heavy sea, unless you can run before it, is not a pleasant home; but the rough days are few and far between, and at the end of a moderately successful cruise, these trifling discomforts are forgotten in a crowd of happy recollections. We spent, on the whole, a most uncomfortable Sunday; nor was it easy to employ ourselves in any way befitting the day. We had, indeed, on board some solid books of divinity, meant, like the preserved meats in tin, to be used when our distance from land placed us out of reach of the fresh article; but with everything knocking about, it was impossible to read; and the deck being much less uncomfortable, and more lively than the cabin, we adjourned there, and whiled away the time by smoking cigars, using our hands as a roof to protect the fire from the spray which flew over us. The vessel proved herself a very weatherly boat, shipping no heavy seas, but only a few bucket-fuls occasionally midships or at the bows, and great

was our admiration as we watched her bound over the waves, often eluding them, in a manner which appeared almost magical, at the very instant when they seemed about to pour upon her deck. In the afternoon the wind abated. At 5.30 we sighted Barra Rock through the haze, bearing half a point on the port bow, and at 9.30 P. M. made the Butt of the Lewis, bearing S. W. by S., having accomplished the run from Thorshaven, a distance of 214 miles, in twenty-four hours; not bad work for a small vessel, considering that at first we had light winds, and afterwards were in so heavy sea, that we were prevented from carrying as much canvas as we should have done in smoother water.

Monday, 19th June. — We entered Raasay Sound by the Northern Mouth, and at two o'clock P. M. found ourselves lying in a dead calm, just outside of Portree. Our letters were to meet us there, and, eager for news of our friends and the Russian War, we hurried forwards in the gig, intending to spend the afternoon in feasting over the piles of letters and newspapers we expected to find. But, alas for human hopes; ours, like so many others, were doomed to disappointment. The man at the Post Office put on his spectacles, looked over the letters with tantalising deliberation, and announced to us the astounding fact that there was nothing for us. We could hardly believe he had heard our names correctly, were sure our friends

must have written, and when at last convinced of the sad truth by examining the letters for ourselves, our indignation knew no bounds. Now, we should not have alluded to a purely personal matter, had not this lesson been fraught with a useful warning to all travellers about to visit Skye. Our friends had, in their simplicity, imagined that a letter would not be longer in reaching Portree than in journeying from London to Vienna; and hence our disappointment, though we had arrived a day or two after our appointed time; and the moral is, that if you direct your letters to meet you in Skye, tell your English correspondents to allow six days for the journey. We posted letters at Portree, and, two days later, others at Oban, and all arrived at home by the same post.

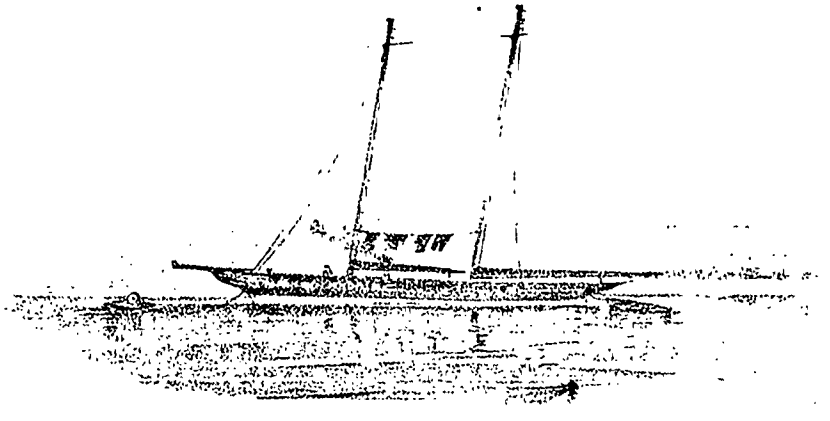
We were off early the next morning, and, passing through the sounds of Kyle Aikin, Sleate, and Mull, the scenery of which has been described by abler pens, we anchored at Oban on the morning of the 22nd June, at six o'clock.

Here we left the "Maria," and took a passage by steamer to Glasgow. It was a sad coming down in the world; instead of ordering everything our own way, we were reduced again to mere nobodies, jostled about on a dirty deck and covered all over by coal smuts in no time. Many a fond glance did we cast back at our little craft, laying quietly at anchor, as we

steamed through Kerrera Sound, and it was with heavy hearts that we at last lost sight of even her slender topmasts behind the point. Nothing now remained of an expedition to which we had looked forward so eagerly and enjoyed so much, except a pleasant retrospect; but we consoled ourselves with that, and the hope of more distant cruises together next season.

"The moments past, if thou art wise, retrieve
With pleasant memory of the bliss they gave;
The present hours in present mirth employ,
And bribe the future with the hopes of joy."

PRIOR.



LAID UP FOR THE WINTER.

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

THE whole western coast of Scotland is the perfection of a yachting ground, abounding as it does in safe harbours and fine scenery; and it is particularly attractive to those who dislike being knocked about at sea. A vessel may keep in smooth water almost the whole way from Crinan to Portree, passing from one sheltered sound to the other, with the exception of only one or two short distances, which are exposed to the open sea. If ladies are of the party, the best place to join a yacht is at Crinan (to which place the steamer from Glasgow and tow-boat through the canal takes you in a few hours), as the rounding the Mull of Cantyre is at times a very rough and tedious operation, owing to the force with which the tides run. From Crinan the sail through Kerrera Sound and up Loch Linnhee to Fort William is very beautiful; and though the voyage round the Island of Skye is less sheltered, it affords so many harbours that it is easy to escape from bad weather, and the scenery is extremely wild and grand. In the course of the cruise many delightful inland excursions are practicable. The drive from Oban to the banks of Loch Awe and back can be managed easily in a day, and takes the traveller through perhaps the most beautiful part of Scotland. The best plan of arranging matters is to take the needful for one's inward man in the carriage,

and lunch on the banks of Loch Awe, as none of the hotels are very conveniently placed for the purpose. From the anchorage of Ballyhulish in Loch Linnhee the drive to Glencoe and back only occupies five or six hours, and from Fort William Ben Nevis can be ascended without sleeping a night out of the yacht. The lake of Corrusken, in Skye, the wildest and grandest lake, probably, in the three kingdoms, is only separated from Loch Scavig by a slip of land a quarter of a mile broad, and can be better visited from a yacht than in any other way; and Loch Staffin, on the north west coast of Skye, is situated at the foot of the hills in which Quirang lies. The ascent and descent from the anchorage to Quirang occupies about three to four hours, and though it is a spot less known than many others in Scotland, it is very well worth seeing. It is described like all the other places alluded to in Black's and Anderson's Guide Books to Scotland; but as these books generally confine themselves to speaking of the land communications, we have thought these details as to the sea points, whence they are most accessible, may prove useful. If time does not admit of the whole of the cruise sketched out being undertaken, the sail from Oban to Fort William is on the whole the most beautiful part of it. Pilots for the coast may be had at Campbeltown, and they are necessary, as the currents are very strong, and apt to get a stranger into trouble. Archibald M'Allister, of Dalintober, close to Campbeltown, was for two seasons with one of the Authors, and gave him every satisfaction.

Note B.

We are indebted for the meteorological statistics in this Chapter to a very excellent work on Iceland, Greenland, and the Feroe Islands, by Mr. James Nichol, of Edinburgh; for the geological information, to

the papers of Sir George Stuart Mackenzie, and Mr. Thomas Allan, in the seventh volume of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and for the medical particulars, to the extracts of Dr. Panum's Report of the Sanitary Condition of the Feroese, given in the seventh volume of the Medico-Chirurgical Review. This gentleman was sent out by the Danish Government in 1846 to investigate this subject.

THE END.

LONDON :
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New-street-Square.

00085262

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 07 April, 2016